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JUNE '9

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3D-RACE

Motorbiking in glorious 3D

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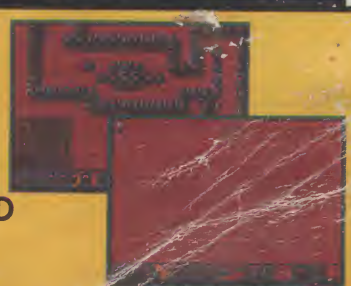
Think hard, move fast



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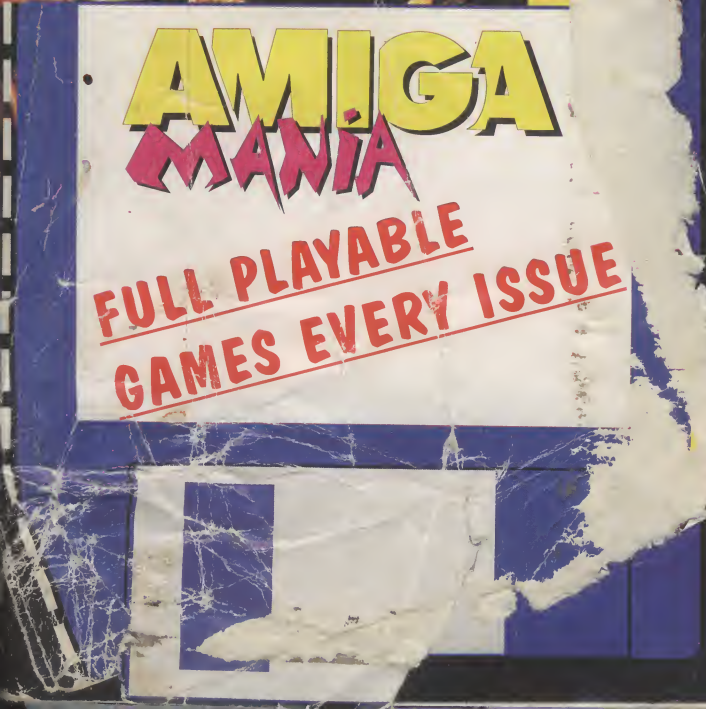

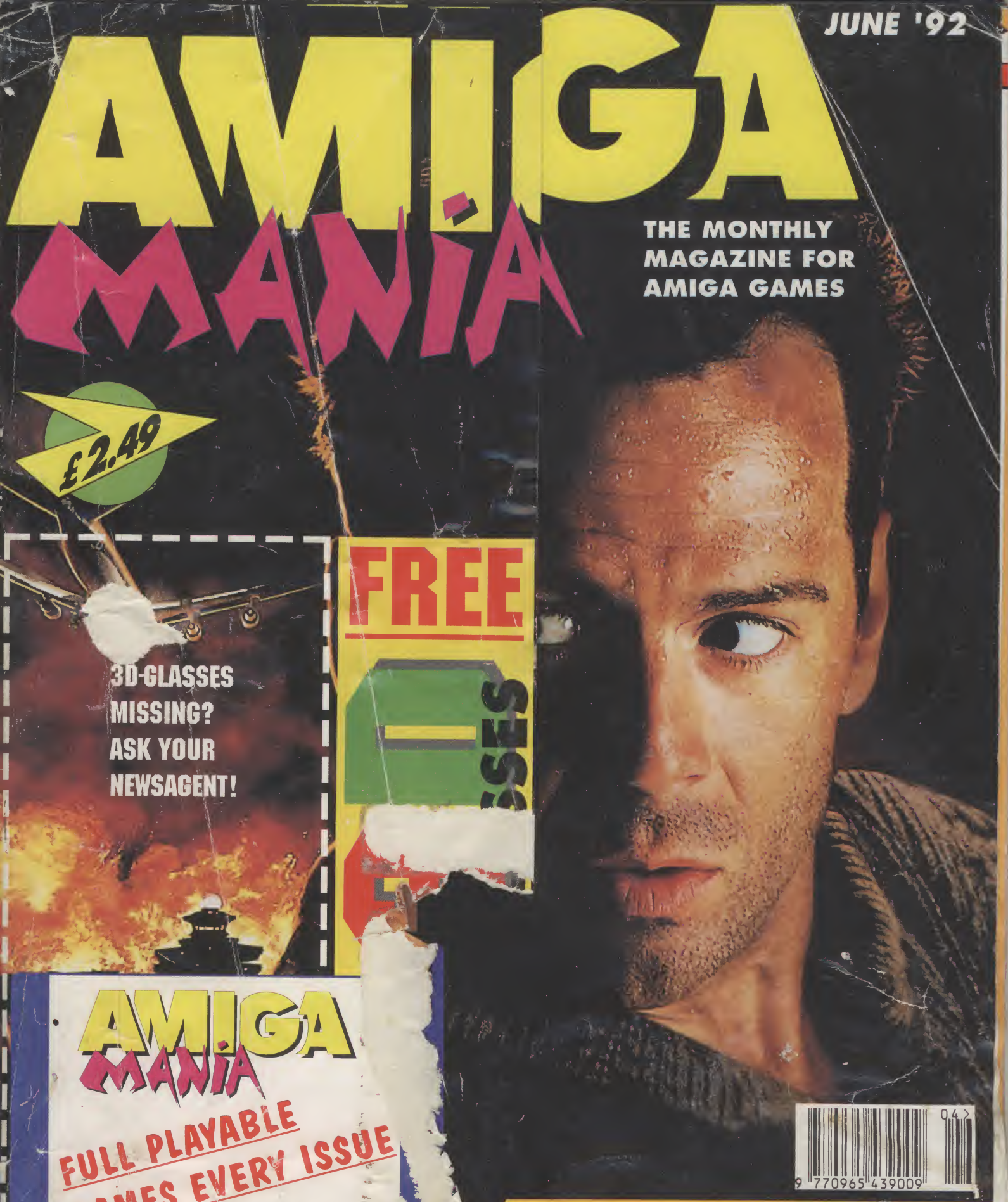

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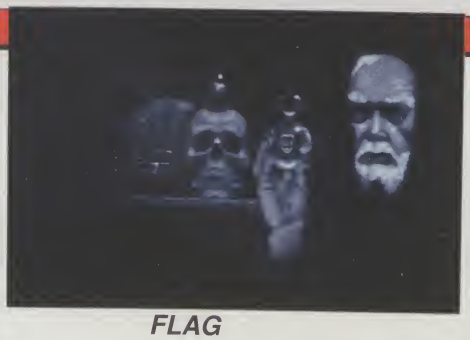
Welcome to another stunning issue of Amiga Mania. You may have noticed a few changes, hopefully you like them, we do.

At last our hero has a name and one lucky reader has a rather large bundle of goodies in the post as you read this, who you ask? You´ll have to read the cartoon strip

to find out

. You may also have noticed the 3D glasses on the front cover. Is this a plot to take over the World or a leap into the third dimension? Put them on and try out the racing game on the front cover to see. Watch those jumps now, they´re alive.

Over the next few months there are treats in store for eveyone, those exponents of RPG and Strategy games especially. We take a look at some of the better offerings.



FLAG

Flag from Gremlin is a world of conflict created by wizards to amuse, with the loosers of the conflict becoming slaves to the all powerful wizards. Unique strategy and an engaging insight into primitive combat make this a game to look out for.

For those who prefer a fight sim with a difference there

ATAC

is **ATAC from Microprose**. For once your wholesale slaughter is not aimed at an unfriendly power (we seem to be running out of those) but against the drug barons of the World and their deadly crops. So blast with a clear concience as you help clean up the drug industry.

Lure of the Temptress from Virgin Games finds one hapless hero in the mist of a hostile castle. Can you guide this poor fellow´s actions as he attempts to defeat the evil Temptress or will he fall foul of her deadly charms.

LURE OF THE TEMPTRESS

We also take a look this month at **SSI**, which has gone from the strategy based wargames to the graphic roleplaying excellence of Eye of the Beholder 2.

You´ll also find an insight into the up and coming software houses as they bring us the latest in horrors from the pen of Steven King with the Lawnmower Man, (odd title that).

JOHN MADDEN AMERICAN FOOTBALL

You can´t beat a good blast and in this month´s reviews you´ll find one of the best - Project X. If you prefer platforms instead of bullets check out Hoi or if sport is your thing then John Maddens American football. Whatever your tastes in software you´ll find something in these pages to satisfy your every desire.

PROJECT X

Until next month keep that trigger finger pumping and those reflexes sharp - *Ed.*

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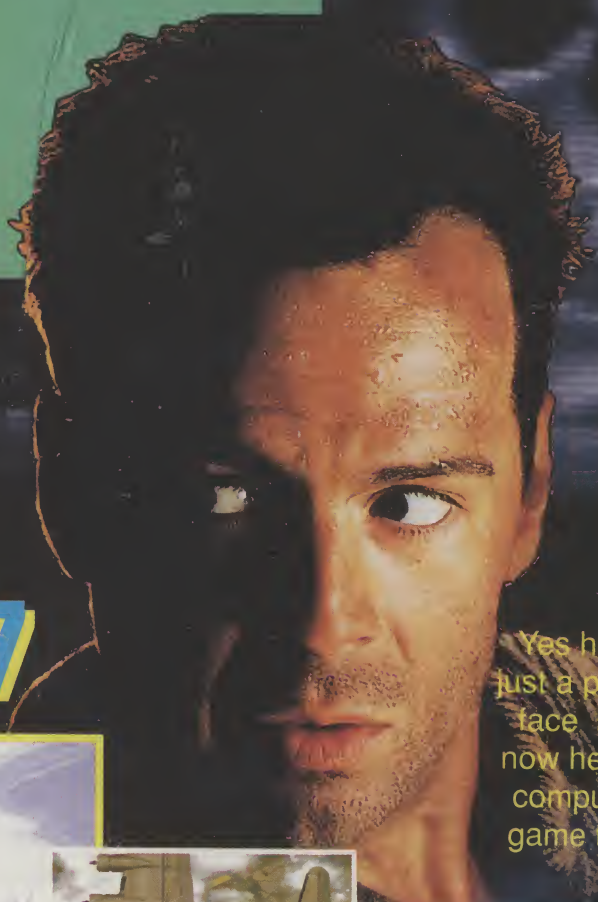
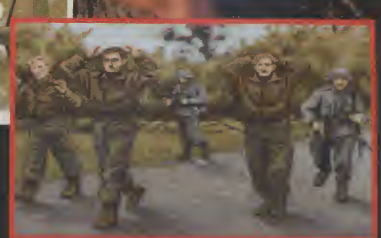
SIM A

Garden Antics as the pests go for total control.



B 17

Yes he´s just a pretty face but now he´s a computer game too.



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ANT

I´heard of a hot head before but this is redi-culous.

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PEANUT POWER

Accolade has picked up the Peanuts license (you know - Snoopy, Charlie Brown and all that lot). The aim of Accolade's venture is to produce a batch of educational games or "edutainment" as they like to call it.

SHOCK HORROR NEW JOYSTICKS FOR AMIGA SCANDAL

Yes, I know the news is pretty mind-blowing but try to be calm about it. There are, it would appear four new joysticks out and about for the Amiga. Quite incredible, I know. Spectravideo are the owners of this amazingly new idea in gaming accessories using the Quickjoy label to rend confusion wherever they go. The four sticks are known as the Megastar (steel shaft, three large buttons), Hyperstar (steel shaft, six small buttons), Superstar (steel shaft, two large buttons & two small buttons) plus the Topstar which is a pistol grip stick ideal for flight sims.
Joysticks, eh? Whatever will those crazy boffins think of next [walks away shaking his head in wonder].

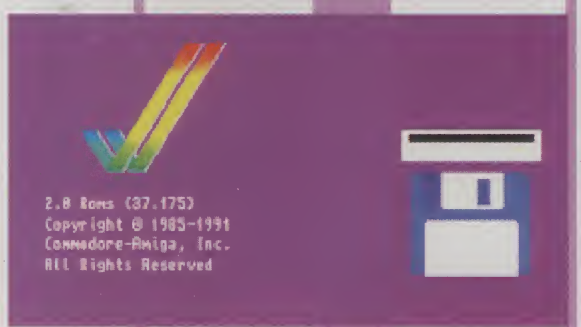
FLOPPY WRIST

You've heard of Tennis Elbow haven't you? Well, how many of you have suffered from Floppy Wrist? This normally occurs when you're backing up the floppies from your latest game. The best and cheapest cure for this condition is an external second floppy drive. However, there are so many of the blighters around that the choice is often too wide. Enter the PC880B Power Drive which offers a few extra features for your £69.95.

The Power Drive also includes something called Blitz Amiga which is a speedy hardware copier which includes the relevant software. The drive also has the ability to sense out a possible virus automatically - all of these features can be switched off, too. Contact Power Computing at 0234 843388

KICKSTART 2 ARRIVES

Got an old Amiga and want to upgrade to the latest Amiga specifications? Well now you can with Commodore's official Kickstart 2 upgrade pack (which was, strangely, never officially announced by Commodore). Priced at around £79.95 (shop around for the best deals) the pack includes the Kickstart 2 ROM, relevant manuals, installation instructions and three disks which include Workbench 2, Extras and Fonts.



Games players should be aware that there are incompatibilities between version 2 of Workbench/Kickstart and some of the older games releases. However, there are plenty of benefits with the new system including a snazzier interface (very 3D) and more efficient system with a lot of the bugs squashed.

The only real problem is that the Super Fat Agnus and Super Denise of the Enhanced Chip Set are not included so, unless you buy them too, you won't see some of the enhanced screen modes. However, many retail outlets will be able to supply you with the whole kit and caboodle.

RAVE ON

Dance fanatics of computer music can now take their listening pleasure one step further. Team 17 has released a cassette, modestly priced at £3.49, featuring original music from Project X and Alien Breed, plus two original tracks by music maestro Andrew Brimble. Send you cheque or postal order to Team 17 Music Offer, Hill House, Halwill Junction, Beaford, Crediton, Devon, EX17 6QE.

BE KAREFUL OUT THERE

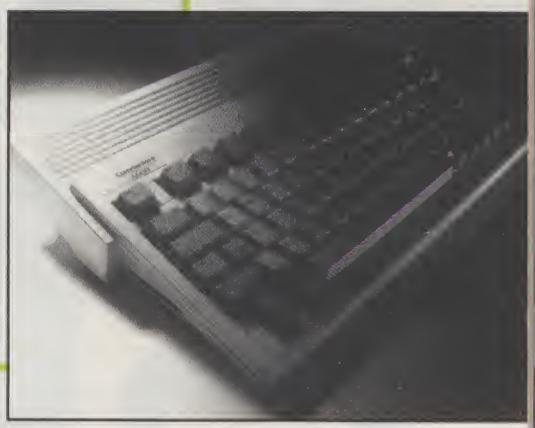
Hill Street Blues, the license of which belongs to Krisilis, has been the centre of a "you show me yours and I'll show you mine" deal with American software house Digitech. The idea is that Krisilis allow Digitech to publish Hill Street Blues, Jahangir Khan's Squash and Laser Squad in the USA and Digitech allow Krisilis to publish something called Vikings Fjords of Conquest plus two other unspecified games over here. Sounds fun to me.

S.H. MOVE ON

Now that Mirrorsoft has finally bit the dust its associated labels have been splattered to the four winds. Take Spectrum Holobyte, for example. In fact Microprose is well ahead of me on that one because they already have. Microprose now distribute all Spectrum Holobyte games in the UK so if your waiting for new stocks of Tetris or Falcon - now you know why.

NEW AMIGA - THE FULL DETAILS

Commodore are to launch the latest Amiga, the A600, for £ 399.00. You should find examples in the shops any day now. The new model is aimed, fairly and squarely, at the games market. The most significant change is the case which looks like your basic A500 but truncated, without the numeric keypad section at the left-hand edge of the casing and with a more `wedge-like' case. The right hand side of the machine sees a pair of joystick ports - far more sensible than the original rear- fitting jobbies. The other significant addition is the ROM- Card slot on the left-hand side of the machine. Although a 20Mb hard disk version (fitted internally) will retail for £499.00 the A600 is not designed for serious applications as the RAM ceiling of only 2Mb testifies. On the compatibility front any A500P game will be compatible with the A600 but many hardware peripherals will be of no use whatsoever due to the lack of an expansion port filled by that new ROM-card port. This also means that the new A570 CDTV add-on will not plug into the A600 either. A bad move me thinks.



ALTERNATIVE LICENSES

Alternative Software recently announced a hatful of licenses including the cult SF series Doctor Who. The deal runs alongside Doctor Who's 30th anniversary. Expect a finished game in the Autumn. In addition, that so-called comedy series, Allo Allo, has also been nabbed. Again, an Autumn release is scheduled. Finally, for its Friendly Learning label Alternative will have the kiddies popular show, Playdays - aka Play School (you remember, "...through the round window, etc, etc").

SHOT IN THE FOOT?

Disturbing rumours over the specifications of the new A570 CDTV compatible CD-ROM add-on for the Amiga A500 made the Amiga Mania team throw their heads back and scream in frustration. The new CD-ROM, which will retail for somewhere around £250-£280 (although Commodore want to reduce the price to £200 as soon as possible) looks like it will only work with Amigas with 1Mb of chip RAM. If so then only A500P users need apply. Failing that, other A500 users will have to go the upgrade path. Oh, and did we say that the new A600 will not be compatible with the A570 CD-ROM? Arrrggghhhh!

BATMAN BOUNCES BACK BOCK BORROR!

Yes, he's back. The masked crusader. The winged wonder. The masked crusader. The-Gotham-City-Cop-in-tight- fitting-garments. The, um, masked crusader. Batman Returns is the latest film based upon one of Marvel Comic's best known hero-type chappies. Konami are producing a game tie-in for the Amiga due for release just before Christmas!

WORKBENCH UPGRADE ON SALE

...ERM...NOW! Yes, it has taken a while but the upgrade kit for anyone with an older Amiga, to the latest version of Workbench is finally available. Costing £79.95 the kit includes Workbench 2.04, Kickstart 2 ROM, plus a bunch of utility disks and manuals.

YOU'VE GOT TO BE KIDDING

Well haven't they? Advanced Emulation Ltd say that they have come up with a new gadget to enable the Amiga to run Megadrive cartridges and Mega-CD titles. Available now-ish at £99 for the necessary software plus £20 for the `cartridge to disk adap[illegible] and £75 for the CD emulation software AEL say that you can run Mega-CD game[illegible] new A570. Features include the possibility of loading the games from floppy [illegible] hard disk and being able to use the usual gamut of cheats on the emulation syste[illegible]

FINNEGAN BEGIN AGAIN

Ex-Ocean director and Special FX boss (creators of Robocop II, The Untouchables and Midnight Resistance) Paul Finnegan has set up a new software house called Rage. Their first title will be a football game called, wait for it, Striker (good, eh?). Out in a couple of months Finnegan was reported to say that, "Everyone that has seen it has been bowled over. This is the one." Sure it's not a cricket game, Paul?

THE COVER DISC

3D-RACE

Load the game

Via the start-up menu, connect the mouse, put on the 3D-glasses and start.

Operation:

Press the mouse button to accelerate, move the mouse left and right to steer.

Have fun!

MOV`EM

The story of the game

Tertiary containers filled with plasma have been torn from their anchors by a collision of the spy freighter Vega VII with an asteroid. The plasma containers must be anchored again with the aid of a droid.

Your task

All the plasma containers must be pushed to an anchor. A control lamp on the top of the container indicates if the container is anchored. The level is completed when all the containers are properly anchored. The aim is not just to complete the level, but to do this in the least possible number of moves.

start

The joystick can be pressed up or down in the title display to select between:

PLAY Play any desired level between 01-99
Levels 01-50 are protected by passwords
Levels 51-99 can be altered with the editor.

SHOW Shows the current high scores of the level.

EDIT Activates the editor. **Warning: levels must be stored!**

The following keys/functions can be used during the game:

ESC	Exit the level
F10	Restart the level again
FIRE	Cancel last move
M	Switch music on/off
SPACE	Move the map to another corner of the screen.

The editor

Levels 51-99 can be selected by pressing the UP/DOWN arrows. One of the five possible objects can also be selected (floor, anchor, container, wall, droid).The objects are inserted in the level by the left mouse button. The right mouse button switches between the upper and lower half of the level.

Note that a correct level must have at least one anchor and one container. The number of anchors must equal the number of containers, if the level is to be completed at all!

Editor functions

SAVE	Store all levels 51-99
TEST	Play the current level
EXIT	Return to title display

WARNING: Do not activate write protection on disks!!

Want to know the best beat´em-up in the World or just peruse through an imformative list of Amiga Mania greats, then look no further.

Each month we will enter the games reviewed into the database to bring you the top ten games of each catagory as recommended by us. We can´t say fairer than that - Ed.

AMIGA MANIA CHARTS

Platform´n Ladders

1.	**Harlequin**	Gremlin
2.	**Hoi**	Hollyware Entert.
3.	**Rainbow Islands**	GBH
4.	**Jet Set Willy 2**	Software Projects
5.	**Rick Dangerous**	Kixx
6.	**Top Banana**	Hex
7.	**Manic Miner**	Software Projects

Strategy

1.	**Castles**	Interplay
2.	**Steel Empire**	Milenium
3.	**Storm Master**	Silmarils
4.	**The Manager**	Software 2000
5.	**Space Crusade**	Gremlin
6.	**Dreadnoughts**	Turcan Research
7.	**Fireteam 2200**	Intercine
8.	**Celtic Legend**	UBI Soft
9.	**Samurai**	Impressions
10.	**Battle Isle**	UBI Soft

Simulation

1.	**Formula One G.P.**	Microprose
2.	**Harpoon**	Electronic Arts
3.	**Traders**	Linel
4.	**Stunt Car Racer**	Kixx
5.	**Vroom**	UBI Soft
6.	**Lotus Esprit T.Ch.**	GBH
7.	**Combo Racer**	GBH
8.	**4D Sports Driving**	Mindscape
9.	**Panzer Battles**	SSG
10.	**Daily Sport C.G.P.**	Emotional Pictures

Arcade

1.	**Dynablasters**	UBI Soft
2.	**Midnight Res.**	The Hit Squad
3.	**Robocop**	The Hit Squad
4.	**Alcatraz**	Infogrames
5.	**Rebel Racer**	Starbyte
6.	**Daylight Robbery**	Electronic Zoo
7.	**Manix**	GBH
8.	**Bonanza Bros.**	U.S. Gold
9.	**Mindbender**	GBH
10.	**Borobodur**	Thalamus

Adventure

1.	**Heart of China**	Dynamix
2.	**Elvira 2**	Accolade
3.	**Suspicious Cargo**	Gremlin
4.	**Covert Action**	Microprose
5.	**Maupiti Island**	Lankhor
6.	**Larry 5**	Sierra-on-Line
7.	**Lords of Time**	Hollyware Enter.
8.	**Heroes o.t. Lance**	Kixx
9.	**Crime City**	If...

Shootem-up

1.	**Video Kid**	Gremlin
2.	**X-Out**	Kixx
3.	**Project X**	Team 17
4.	**Venus the Flytrap**	GBH
5.	**Rubicon**	21st Century
6.	**St. Dragon**	Kixx
7.	**Voyager**	The Hit Squad
8.	**Thunderstrike**	GBH
9.	**Agony**	Psygnosis
10.	**The Godfather**	U.S. Gold

Roleplaying

1.	**Abandon. Places**	Electronic Zoo
2.	**Ultima VI**	Origin
3.	**Might & Magic 3**	U.S. Gold
4.	**Black Crypt**	Electronic Arts
5.	**Heroquest**	Gremlin
6.	**Fate: Gates of**	Rainbow Arts
7.	**Spirit of Adv**	Starbyte
8.	**Return of M**	Starbyte
9.	**Gateway t.**	SSI
10.	**Pools of**	SSI

Beatem-up

1.	**Deliverance**	21st Century
2.	**First Samurai**	Vivid Image
3.	**Renegad**	The Hit Squad

Sport

1.	**.M. Am. Football**	Electronic Arts
2.	**Ultimate Golf**	GBH
3.	**Advantage Tennis**	Infogrames
4.	**World Class Rugby**	Audiogenic
5.	**Tip Off**	Anco

Jaguar XJ220 - *(Core)*

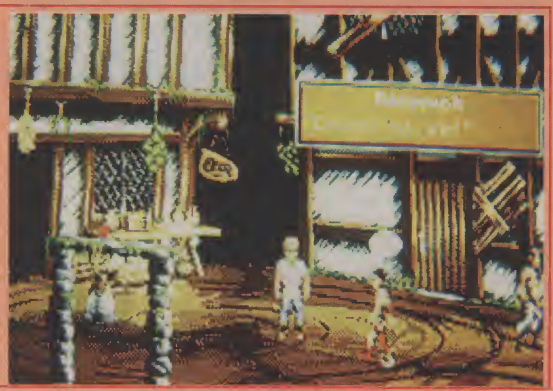
Continuing with the fine tradition of car racing games Core bring you the exploits of the Jaguar XJ220. At £350,000 a go not many people get to drive one of these cars not to mention race one over thirty six tracks scattered around the World against some of the fastest cars in production. Not only do you face the hazards of wind, rain and fog but more tangible obstacles such as swamps, sandstorms, waterfalls and many other bizarre and wonderful hazards.

Available now.

Lure of the Temptress

(Virgin Games)

Alas poor Diermot, a simple soul who now finds himself in the hands of the evil Skorls. Before this simple peasant can escape to return to his rather dull life he must solve many puzzles and confront the dreaded Temptress. Lots of characters who live their own lives within this simulation plus the promise of a game system that will leave you struggling with the puzzles and not the game make this an interesting offer indeed.



Available mid-May.

Dune - *(Virgin Games)*

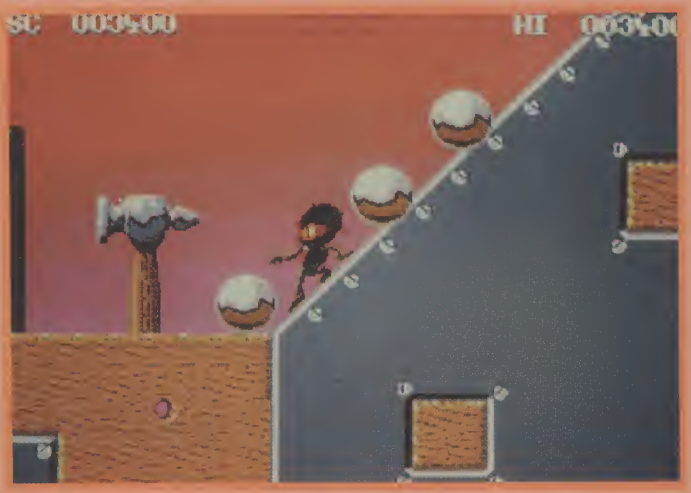
If you like building sand castles then the planet Dune is for you, just watch out for the mile long worms, they're a real killer. A futuristic conflict between two families in a corrupt empire, you need the brains and the fighting skills to survive on this hostile world. Politics are rife as you fight for survival with the dreaded Fremem as your allies. Virgin will also be releasing the soundtrack through Virgin Records for those dedicated enough to buy it.

Available now.

The Lawnmower Man

(Storm)

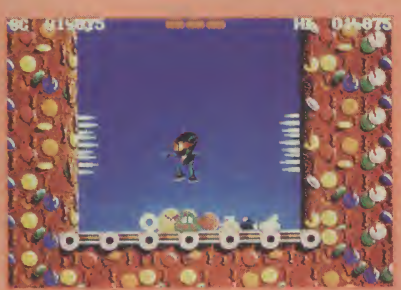
It's gruesome, it's grizzle, it's the latest Steven King trip beyond imagination and straight into horror. The film explores the world of virtual reality as it will be in five years time and the grizzly deeds that can be committed when reality is only limited by imagination.



Available very, very soon.

Zool: The Ninja of the Nth Dimension
(Gremlin)

Cute and deadly action as the masked, well thing from another dimension, goes on the rampage. This highly athletic hero must bounce and slice his way through many levels of cute nasties ranging from fruit to D.I.Y. implements. If it all gets a little too much you can always resort to magic and watch those nasties fry.



Available in July.

Liverpool - *(Grandslam)*

At last the Liverpool football game is about to hit the streets. Take on the challenge of the F.A. Cup as you take control of Liverpool F.C. in their bid for victory. One or two players compete in this complete simulation, you have statistics on all the Liverpool players. As well as three types of shot, you can head the ball, knock the legs from under your opponent with a sliding tackle or just take them head on. It's all here.

Available early next year.

Daemonsgate I: Dorovans Key - *(Gremlin)*

When a demonic horde surrounds your city with the intent of starving you out an adventure begins. As the leader of a band of eight hack 'n' slash exponents it is your task to discover where this horde came from and how can you send them back. Unlike other conventional roleplaying games your authority is not absolute. Give a command to a character and they may perform the task in question, ignore it completely or do what they think you want them to do. In short each character has his and her own personalities which effect the way they behave. Add to this a massive and highly detailed play area with loads of characters going about their daily lives and you have a sure winner.

Available in June

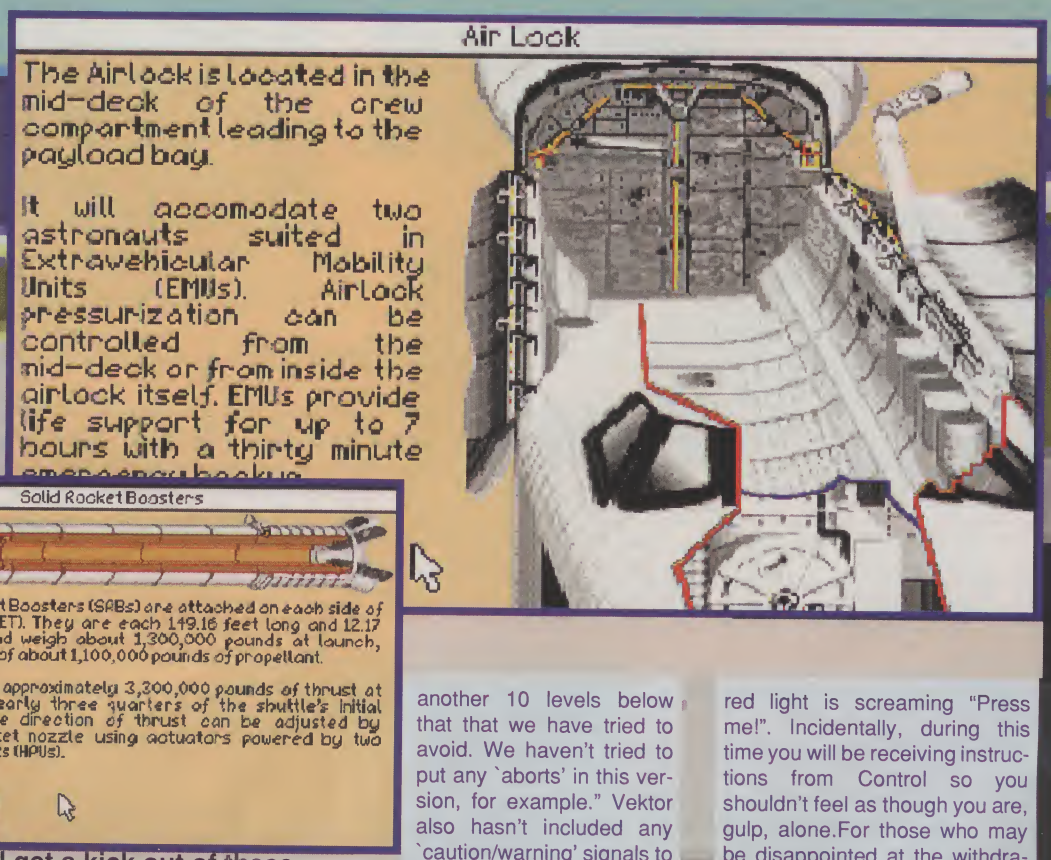
Flag - *(Gremlin)*

They certainly are busy at Gremlin, this time we experience the delights of Deskworld, created by the wizard North-Hearn in one of his bored moments. The inhabitants of the two villages in the world of Flag must slug it out every twenty years, the losers serving the wizard until the next round of combat. Taking control of your village you must muster your men, spells and formulate devious plans to bring about the downfall of the enemy village. With soldiers, guards, saboteurs, ram units and builders you options are open but then so are those of the opposition.

Higher than a kite. Games based upon the Space Shuttle are not exactly plentiful. The July release of Virgin's Space Shuttle programmed by Vektor Grafix will not only pave the way for a new type of simulation but also add new layers of complexity to it.

SHUTTL

Vektor's Andy Craven explains why a shuttle simulation was undertaken, "I think the market place dictated it. Everyone is getting really fed up with `F' numbers: F-19, F-15, F-117, etc. I feel the market is saturated for those type of products. Then the market switched to tanks games, now its helicopter simulations. "The Shuttle is the most complex object ever built. When the idea was put towards us we thought, do we make it a game? However, Shuttles don't fire guns or kill people. We did have a game section in it featuring laser guns and so on but we took it out as we felt that it detracted from the product." So the decision was made to take the level of realism as far as was possible in the time frame. New 3D technologies were researched, custom built editors were developed specifically for the creation of the complex Shuttle panels and the many subtle, yet essential methods of suspending the player's disbelief were worked upon. Andy elaborates, "If you take any game that leaves the planet's surface they leave the surface, which is flat, and eventually it pops to become a coloured sphere in the distance. In Shuttle the curvature of the Earth appears, the sky starts getting darker, stars (real constellations) come out and so on. Looking down upon the Earth you will see every continent and island generated realistically." Realism doesn't stop there. The orbital mechanics have been researched in depth. You are, after all, orbiting the Earth at around 18,000 miles/hour so adjacent objects have to be approached correctly, "On the grounds of adding more and more realism - the only barrier we have had is time. In my mind," says Andy, "we only go so deep into the Shuttle's instrumentation. However, there are, at least, another 10 levels below that that we have tried to avoid. We haven't tried to put any `aborts' in this version, for example." Vektor also hasn't included any `caution/warning' signals to any deep detail. That is, things that might occur in the Shuttle can trigger off a caution/warning light. Vector actually had all of these in working order but they took them out because the product is so complex as it is. Vektor were beginning to become afraid that it might put people off. To aid the player, Vektor has doubled the command system from the basic keyboard commands to a keyboard and menu system - plus a windowing system and, for the confused, six different help levels! The help system, that is tuned by the player, works as follows. During the many tasks to be executed to obtain take off, for example, you will either be given no help at all right up the scale to the point where a little red box is placed around a panel and a flashing red light is screaming "Press me!". Incidentally, during this time you will be receiving instructions from Control so you shouldn't feel as though you are, gulp, alone.For those who may be disappointed at the withdrawal of the complex systems, you may be happy to hear that they may be included within Shuttle 2 - a project which is still under consideration. There is a spectrum of controls within the game including a complex fuel management system, anti-skid controls, hydraulic isolation valves that controls the undercarriage,



You'll get a kick out of these

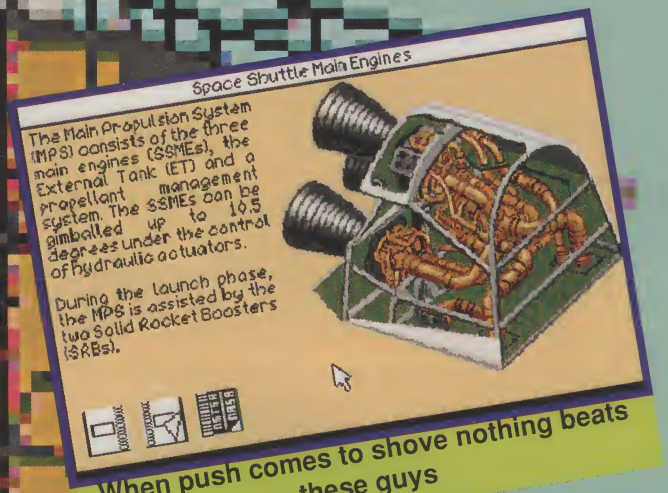
close-circuit camera controls, high speed communications, the famous robot arm and so on. Also, the action and re-action of the launch has been modelled. For example, when you enter space your external fuel tanks and rocket boosters fall away (they even react, spin and burn up accurately). If you don't generate an orbit you will just re-enter the Earth's atmosphere and burn up. However, danger always lurks. Try separating those rocket boosters while they are

LE

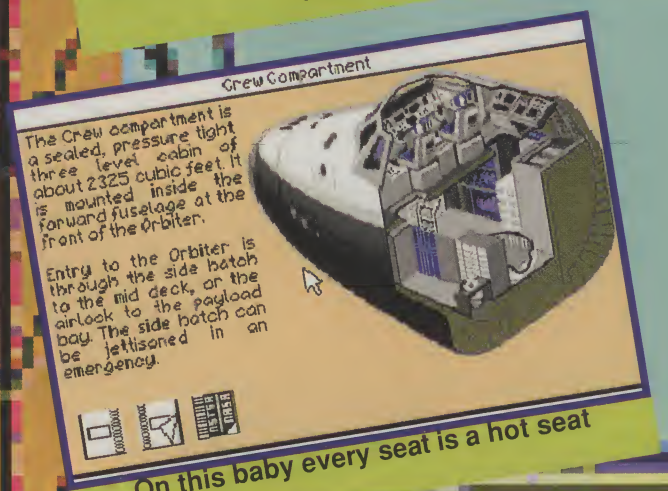
VIRGIN GAMES

still being fed fuel by that large, external, orange- coloured piece of kit and the whole Shuttle will explode. Panels, which contain a gamut of switches and readouts, are extensive to say the least, and must be divided into a number of screens which you must scroll around. The overhead panel is around five screens upwards by ten screens wide. There are eight of these multi-screen panels in the Shuttle. Missions include: a glide launch off a back of a 747 - to land on a runway; a test launch, which takes you into space and then you return straight back to earth; the third mission is the same but from a different launch site (you are put onto a different orbit, too); you then test the MMU to send a chap into space on a space-walk (you can flip from the Shuttle to the MMU station), "The meanest thing you can do is to put the man into space in his MMU, shut the doors, come home and leave him there!" Andy adds wryly (I'd hate to be under Andy's command on a mission). Next mission is to launch a satellite by letting it float out of the launch bay, then by using the robot arm. You can also launch the Hubble Telescope - then three missions later you go back and repair it! You can also build two sections of a space station. Some of the missions require a fair bit of preparation. For example, if you need to use the robot arm you have to power it up, release its restraining latches and unstore it from its launch position. The final mission listed in the Shuttle simulation does not take place in space. It is an instrument landing mission. Get this - you begin the mission in space, the program then turns off the 3D until you are 25 feet of the ground. "I have only done it once myself," cackles Andy. For the return to Earth landings Vektor Grafix has modelled the Shuttle's flight model so that the flare and stall react in a realistic manner Shuttle looks like it will re-define the word 'simulation' on the Amiga. That is, if the original PC version is anything to go by. The graphics will remain exactly the same as the PC version, incidently, but you will need 1 Meg of RAM to play it.

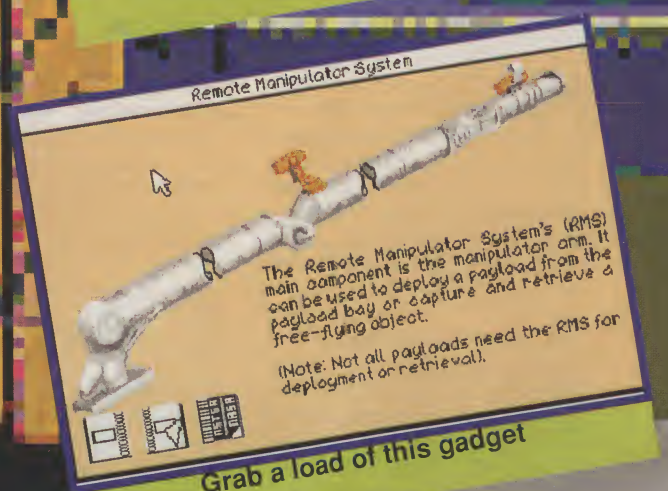
Paul Rigby



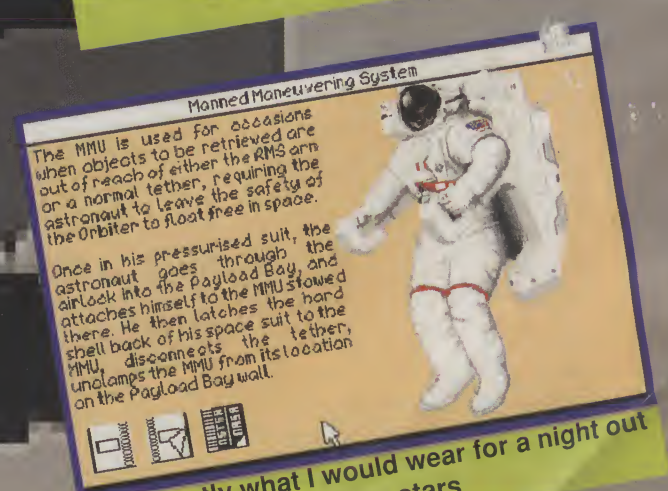
When push comes to shove nothing beats these guys



On this baby every seat is a hot seat



Grab a load of this gadget



Not exactly what I would wear for a night out with the stars

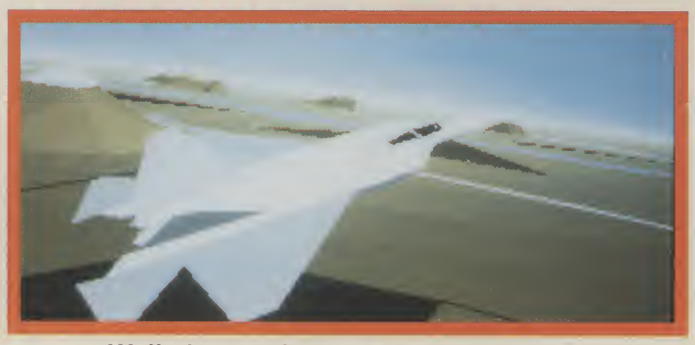
You're not here, you don't exist and you didn't just bomb that field. Drugs - the stuff is never out of the news in one form or another.

Now it is the subject of a new game from Microprose. Called ATAC, it is essentially a strategy based flightsimulation. Steve Perry explained how the game was developed, "What we started out with was a brief to develop another flight simulator. We didn't actually want to do just that. We wanted it to mean much more than just touring the skies killing baddies. We thought, let's have an interest which is kind of global. So that there is no partisan element involved - reds or blues or whatever - drugs seemed to be a fairly good subject for that scenario."Thus the game is about the war against drugs. However, in ATAC, you don't have to kill anybody to win the war. That doesn't mean that you don't have to kill anybody at all, of course, but you don't set out with the intention of taking life as you do in other combat simulations. "We wanted to concentrate more on the politics or finance of the scenario," said Steve.Central America is the scenario. This is the place where lots of drugs are grown and lots of rich people sell them, after processing, to abroad. They continue the cycle by making lots of money, then they grow more drugs and the whole thing repeats itself. Having done quite a bit of research on the area - factual research such as Time magazine and fictional, such as books written by the likes of Tom Clancy - Microprose decided that one way to combat the drugs menace would be to hit the Drug Barons financially. Steve Perry explains,"So you would find where they are growing the stuff - destroy it, where they are processing the stuff - destroy it, where they are transporting the stuff - destroy the transport. Just keep hitting them where it hurts until they go bust. From that we developed the concept of, not a flight simulator, but a strategy game."There are a number of drug barons in the game. However, there is the capacity for an extra opponent - Columbia. That is, if you go around killing peasants and burning food crops instead of drug crops then the peasants are going to get really ticked off with you. In will step the Columbian government which is going to be really unhappy.ATAC is set in the future. The first year of operations is 2002 and the game is played on a day by day basis. The player of the game is, "...the commander of a covert force which is situated somewhere in the jungle," commented Steve, "at a small airstrip with a limited number of

Is this some innocent farmer or the scum of the earth? Let´s blast them anyway

aircraft: helicopters (a generic type based on the Apache) and F-22 ATFs (which will be old fashioned technology by then)."The reason for the `old' technology is that the operation is supposed to be covert. So the sponsoring force (the Pentagon or NATO - it hasn't been decided) would have a hell of a job explaining the budget for a force that didn't actually officially exist. However, the Barons are exceedingly rich and can probably afford even better equipment than you have so you can expect a rough ride in this game. You have a number of pilots - who cannot be replaced, unlike the aircraft (re-supplies will be allowed). You can fly four units in the air at one time: aircraft, helicopters or a mix. In addition, there are spies on the ground. Some on your side and others who may be double agents. They supply information which is collated into a folder which you read on-screen. On the basis of this information you will then have to decide what missions your team will undertake. This is a departure for Microprose who normally structure their flight simulations with planned missions. The objective is to bankrupt the barons - so it will be up to you to decide how best to go about that task.Strangely, the graphics look decidedly average for a new flight sim. Two possible explanations can be offered for that. Firstly, to allow the standard Amiga to maintain a decent frame rate and, secondly, that the game's development has concentrated on the essential gameplay. Or both, of course. Find out in the upcoming review

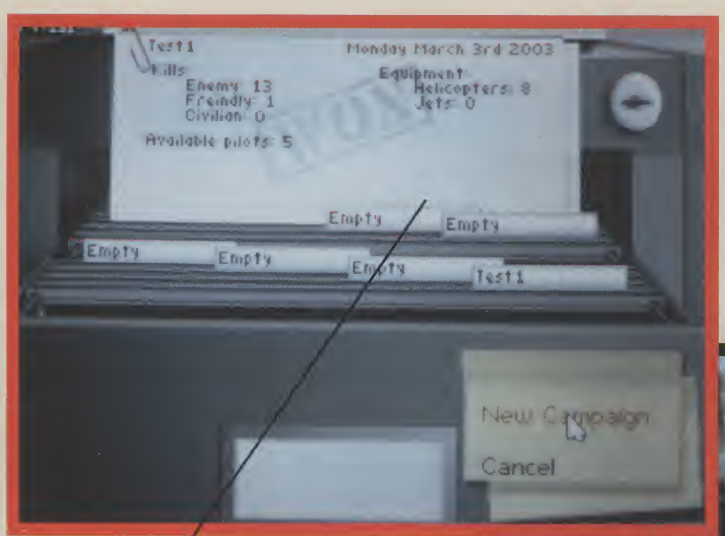
Paul Rigby



Well, the outside view is nice anyway.

ATAC

MICROPROSE



Here come your orders, the very, very Top Secret ones. So what you waiting for let´s go bomb the buggers.

At last you can blast away to your heart´s content without any twinges of conscience

Lure of the Temptress

Can you resist her deadly charms? One of the most popular types of game around on the Amiga is the graphic adventure. The most famous exponents of this genre are Sierra and Lucasfilm. However, stand by for a UK challenger from Revolution Software, via Virgin, called Lure of the Temptress.

The story runs as follows. You play Diermot, he's living quite happily in his little village. One day the King rides through with his courtiers to do a bit of hunting. Diermot wants to make a bit of money with this event so he tries to sign up as a beater. Suddenly, the King hears news of a revolt started by a mysterious Enchantress who's taking over the town. The King rides off. You aren't interested but your uncontrolled horse drags you into this escapade. So you begin the game as an unwilling hero. Revolution's Charles Cecil explains how LOT came into being, "I used to work at Activision 'till its demise. While I was there we used to ship Sierra product. It occurred to me that the engine Sierra was using was, and still is, outdated. They introduced it five years ago and really haven't developed it. However, we have looked at Lucasfilm's Monkey Island programs and we now have them in our sights. "What Revolution has developed is a system called Virtual Theatre. One of its better points is that it actually has people wandering around a 'real world' as if they really exist. If, for example, you follow somebody from one room to the next, providing they have gone into that room and providing they haven't done something they will still be there. "Which

means." commented Cecil. "that you can stand where you are and everyone wanders around doing intelligent things, talking to each other and performing actions. For example, the Blacksmith, that you need to find at the beginning, goes to his forge and he hammers away. If you ask, where you can find a Blacksmith then people will say to go to the forge but they'll also say that he's also partial to a drink. So he'll either be in the forge, or the bar or maybe going on a different errand somewhere else." Another principle feature of Virtual Theatre is the intelligent characters. You can string together commands using the `Tell' feature and certain `servant' characters. Commands are issued by floating the cursor over a person you wish to issue commands to and clicking the left mouse button (the cursor changes shape depending upon what you want to do). This then accesses all the verbs that are associated with that noun. "So if you move the cursor over Ratpouch, your servant" remarked Cecil, "you can click on `Tell'. The program knows it's Ratpouch so it prints `Tell Ratpouch to' and then you list all the verbs, which you can scroll up and down. So you could select, Go To, Open, Lock, Close, etc. If you select `Go To' all of the rooms appear in list form. However, you can't tell somebody to do something until they know about it so you can't tell someone to go to a room unless you know about the room. If you tell Ratpouch to go to the guardroom you either get a choice of `And Then' in case you want him to do more stuff or finish. If you select `And Then' more verbs appear and so on. In that way you build up a very complicated set of instructions but in a very simple way." Characters also have a memory of sorts so if you give a character instructions to talk to somebody who isn't there he will remember that he has been given the instructions. So when he is in the room when that person re-appears then he'll talk to him. Another plus for the Revolution system is something called `autorouting'. This means that an independent character can walk from one point in the room to another and if somebody or something gets in his way then he mathematically works out the best way of walking around it. Neither Lucasfilm, Sierra or Delphine do this because they don't have independent characters moving around. Instead they have `tram lines'. This means, if you point to an object on the screen then the character will walk to the nearest tram line, follow that tram line and then get off again. Instead of the tram line system, however, each one of the LOT characters is dynamically updating his path which means that you could have five or six people on the screen and they'll all walk around each other sensibly. As they are doing this they may comment to each other such as `get out of my way' or `excuse me' and so on. You can also overhear conversations when you sit in the bar, for example, as background information. "Because we can't guarantee that you will be listening," Cecil said, "we don't give any vital information. Relevant to the plot but not vital to progress through the game. It's written in a very humorous way so it is worth exploring. Text-wise, we've got lots of little gems hidden around, lots of funny situations. There's no way that everyone is going to see all of it, we've got well over 2000 sections of text. Most of which no one player will ever read. We want to reward the player for exploring." Another positive aspect of the LOT system is that, reportedly, there are no blind alleys. Cecil explains, "Before the player moves to the next section we force them to have all the objects that they will need in the next section." Also, where character interaction is concerned, the questions you ask are geared towards your objective and the more people you ask the clearer that objective becomes - which almost serves as a help function. The questions themselves are listed, as in Monkey Island, but at the top of the screen instead of at the bottom as in the Lucasfilm game. Those questions can relate to object manipulation or character interaction. However, the only time you use the building up of a sentence using the lists of verbs and nouns is when you want someone to do something. Lure of the Temptress could be the first serious UK challenge to the adventures from the big American software houses. Who knows? It might even leapfrog the Americans to become numero uno. Check out the full review in Amiga Mania soon.

Paul Rigby

FLAG

GREMLIN

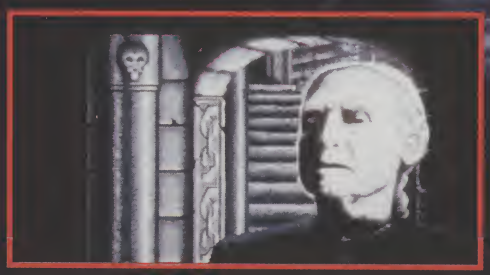
A flag in the hand is worth twenty in the bush. Developed by Envision for Gremlin, Flag takes you back to the time of wizards and all that jazz.

Oh well, I didn't have anything planned for the next twenty years anyway

Picture a planet called Orm which is just a shard of rock floating around space that includes the 'normal' magical influences. Because the wizards are a war-like race one of the wizards had the nifty idea that they would use the game of Flag to settle all differences, using two zombie armies to do all of their fighting. Whatever the outcome of the combat, they abided by it. Seven hundred years later along you come, an evil wizard with world domination on his mind. To achieve this you must challenge the other wizards to a game of Flag and defeat them. Canny, eh? There are ten opponents but you must beat them four times to win, which makes forty levels but there are extra levels for special occasions. If you beat the ten opponents the planet is yours. "The big difference in this scenario is that you're the baddie." said Envision programmer Ian Harling. "The game itself is a bit like Paintball in as much that the objective is that, simply, one of your men has to touch the enemy flag and visa-versa, the flag can be placed anywhere you like. Putting it in your stockade might be a good idea. To make things more difficult you and your opponent can build walls (which costs gold) anywhere you like - to protect the flag or to make it difficult for the enemy to cross a bridge or whatever." Flag is presented in full screen isometric 3D and offers multi-directional scrolling. All of the characters interact properly with the background so characters can walk behind a tree and each other, for example, ".which a lot of other people don't normally bother with," added Harling. The play area, per level, is around six full screens by six - 49 levels in all at the moment. You start with no players on the board.

In my vast experience this looks like a good time to run

Set your guards well as the enemy has little respect for the careless



Hey, does this guy really know what he´s talking about.

They are all created at the start. Soldiers are the basic unit. They are cannon fodder used just for fighting with basic spears. You also have other units such as bombardiers who can blow up walls. These are suicide troops who plant bombs and blow up with them. All of the action takes place in and around the two stockades - you each have one each. Then you've got magic on top of that. Spells available include things like `plague'. If you give one of your pieces a plague spell you can send him out amongst the enemy and he will transfer a plague from person to person and, one by one, the enemy soldiers die. Other spells include extra strength, extra speed, and so on. In amongst all of this is the importance of certain buildings within the stockade such as the treasury, the barracks and the merchant's house. You have another piece, a ninja, who is very single minded. If you order him to burn down the enemy treasury (all of the pieces cost gold) then they have no more gold and can't buy any more pieces. If you send a ninja against a barracks then the destroyed building means that he cannot create any more soldiers. The ninja is a pretty powerful chap. A soldier will, when moving on a task, divert to attack an enemy soldier if he comes across one. The ninja will not do this but will only complete the task in hand. Buildings damaged by the ninja can be repaired again but that takes more gold. The destruction of the merchant's house means that the merchant who provides extra gold for your coffers will never arrive. If the enemy kills your merchant then he gets your gold. Of course, you can escort the merchant with your soldiers if you wish. Finally, a dragon can be bought to prey on enemy soldiers but he also eats idle soldiers - including your own. Graphically, the game changes as the you progress. The beginning levels begin as a medieval scenario and slowly progresses to a more Elizabethan feel. This means that your equipment may change. The stockade may diminish instature, for example. A river divides the two stockades.Normally soldiers will use the bridge to cross the river butif you've blocked off the bridge then they'll wade through thewater. However, they will also lose a bit of their strength.Soldiers lose strength during a successful combat, too, butthat is slowly regained. "The joy of Flag is the controlsystem because we have got a `tagging multisystem', issuingmultiple commands. I can order a soldier (or up to fivesoldiers) to come out of the barracks, move right up to thenorth end of the play area where nobody is going to see him,then walk right down again behind the other person's barracks,attack two guards and then go into the stockade and capturethe flag. You can also order patrols which the soldiers willendlessly follow," said Harling. The commands are issued by asimple series of icons accessed without having to go back andforwards through menus and things. All commands areinstantaneous and movement is real time. This can get quitehectic with up to 50 soldiers on each side on-screen at onetime. "This sounds like we are trying to create gameplay byrushing the player," commented Harling. "That is not the case.You do have a mini-map, as in Populous which enable you tokeep a tag on your men." When one of your soldiers hasfinished his task, unless told to do otherwise he'll stand in the place that he completed his task and thus become an idle soldier. You can use this as a tactic to build up ten, twentyidle soldiers outside the enemy stockade so that you can rushthem in there when you need them. "The multitude of possible strategies and the need to think ahead by several moves givesthe game a `chess' feel," enthused Harling. Also, Envisionsay that you can link two machines up via the comms link, oryou can play a one or two player game on one machine. "We arealso working on it so you can play through modems in realtime. With a bit of luck we may be able to rig up four or fivedifferent stockades, if you can link up enough Amigas. If youcan link up a modem too it would make a nice game for anetwork like CIX," mused Harling. Requiring 1Meg of RAM, Flagshould be out and about pretty soon - we should have a reviewin the next issue.

Paul Rigby

It´s better than a poke in the eye with a six foot, very sharp, very pointy spear

SSI Profile

SSI is famous, or infamous depending on your point of view, for it's official AD&D RPGs. Ever since Pool of Radiance hit the streets SSI's financial fortunes have taken a turn for the better. In fact, such has been the attention thrust upon SSI that Amiga gamers new to the scene could be forgiven for thinking that SSI began life with the AD&D license.

Not so, in fact, as SSI boss and founder, Joel Billings, states SSI has roots of a different breed, "We started in 1979 initially to do computer wargames and other strategy games, but wargames were the primary focus. I've been a wargamer for a long time."

In fact, 1979 saw Billing's first wargame production, Computer Bismark. Programmed on a beast known as a North Star Horizon and converted over to the Apple II.

"We thought we would be a mail-order company but within a month we were inundated with orders from dealers. So very quickly, we became a distributor to retail stores," said Joel.

From that time on SSI never looked back. It was even at the forefront of game presentation as it was the first company to sell it's games in boxes. Joel's bedroom was stacked full of the things, "If there had been an earthquake I would probably have never come out of it alive..." he quipped.

Although RPGs figured in SSI's release schedules it was the wargames that hit the headlines with the American press praising the quality of the early `Computer...' titles (eg: Computer Bismark, Computer Ambush, etc), through to greats such as `War in Russia', `Kampfgruppe', `Carrier Force' and `Gettysburg'. Since the TSR license, wargames and strategy have played second fiddle to SSI's RPG licensed titles but, recently, SSI has announced a number of significant wargame titles to signal a kind of renaissance for the wargaming veterans.

Using the same game `engine' that has been used for it's other successful wargame titles: Second Front and Western Front, SSI is developing a game known as Carrier Strike (one or two player). Set in WW2 during the Pacific War you play the commander of a carrier task force. Basically, you get your orders that say: here's the ships you have got, here is what your objectives are, now go do it. You can actually refuse to undertake those missions. So, for example, if you think that the Battle of the Midway is too hot to handle you can ignore it. Of course, this won't make you fave officer in the mess at weekends. It'll cost you all shades of victory points, too.

Yes, the game comes with a number of scenarios but it is the campaign option which sounds the most appealing. One reason being that your task force's fortunes within each scenario is linked so that your complement within each successive scenario depends on what you did in the previous one. Thus, refusing to partake in particular scenarios may not be as daft as it first sounds. Scenarios include the Battle of the Coral Sea, Midway, Eastern Solomon Islands, Santa Cruz, the Marianas and, finally, Torokina (a fictitious battle) which acts as a `what if...' scenario to the historical dabblers out there. This scenario does not feature in the campaign, though.

Additions to the basic `Front' engine include detailed flight operations which allow you to allocate flight patterns to aircraft, you also have to manage your aircraft in various ways. Right down to moving them from the flight deck to below decks to refuel, re-arm and place them back on the flight deck for re-launch. However, the more aircraft you move on your aircraft's elevators the more elevator capacity you take up. So you may not be able to do all of the moves that you want. So you've got to say to yourself, what aircraft do I really have to get off the deck first and so on. Therefore, you will need to arrange a set of priorities - all of which can become quite hectic during a battle scenario.

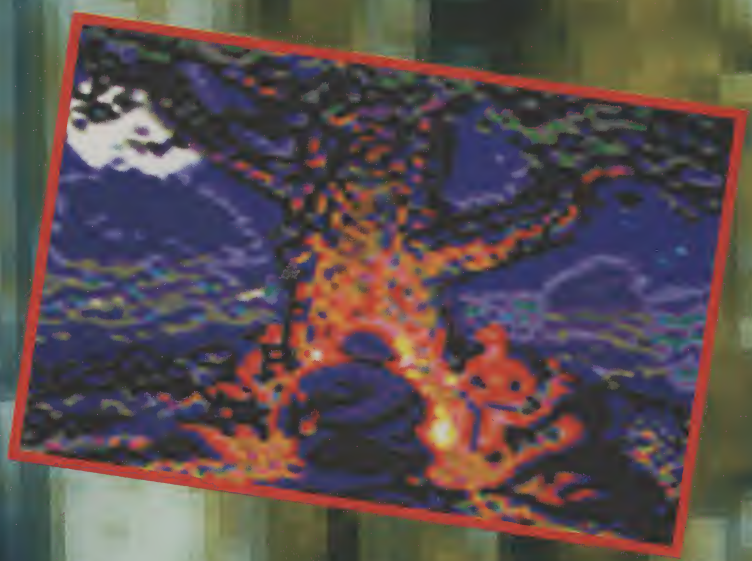
As any good WW2 carrier commander knows search planes are your eyes. Therefore, expect to be using them a lot in Carrier Strike. However, reconnaissance such as this is rarely 100% accurate. You will find yourself having to send streams of search planes into

different areas in an effort to piece together the jigsaw of enemy movements and intentions. Other management features include assigning CAP (Combat Air Patrol) and, at the same time, deciding how many aircraft should be sent on a particular strike. Time is a big factor, here. Clocks will denote exactly how much time you have got to complete certain moves. This means that, for example, you will have to juggle your elevator capacity to get as many aircraft into the air as possible. In addition to the time spent moving up and down elevators there is a limit to the amount of aircraft you can launch, aircraft you can recover from a mission,
refuelling time and so on. Which all adds to the realism.

Graphical and audio niceties are plentiful. For example, when you get attacked you will see an overhead view of your task force. Bomb explosions will be seen around your ship and when a bomb hits a suitable explosion graphic and sound effects will cut in. Incidentally, if you are hit you can flick to a damage screen that tells you all of the bad news. You'll see what percentage of your ship has been damaged, if the ship has had to reduce speed and so on. Other features include flak, damaged aircraft smoking wings and spewing fire and on. The scenes are by no means cinematic but they do add atmosphere.

Maintaining the nautical theme is Bismark which could very well be the largest and most talked about SSI strategy/wargame release of '92. Developed by the chaps who brought you Silent Service II (SS2), Bismark (a working title at the moment) will offer a similar type of gameplay. The game, basically covers the Battle of the Atlantic during WW2 (1939-43). Bismark imitates the excellent SS2 feature of photographing models of the actual ships and digitising them to offer pinpoint representation but with a full 360 degree view of all enemy ships.

As fleet commander, you have the option of taking part in several famous battles or basic missions or to go through the entire confrontation in a campaign option. So, depending on what battle/mission you have chosen you will be given your objective such as convoy escort or to destroy a particular target. Something that was never placed into SS2 and will be put into Bismark is an instant replay that will track all of your movements to allow you to monitor your tactics and how well you performed during the battle.



In addition the `Docudrama' will, in a cinematic style, trigger and chronicle all of the major events that occurred during the war. So, for example, while you're tackling the Bismark you will be hearing of other confrontations taking place around the Atlantic.

Other options include aircraft spotters and aircraft attacks that can be ordered from carriers and land based stations, liaison with other fleet units such as cruisers and destroyers and weather (which affects visibility). You can also bounce between the bridges of different ships. Imagine commanding the British force that contains the Hood, Prince of Wales, Norfolk and Suffolk against the Bismark and Prinz Eugen. You are allowed to transfer your control from the Hood to the Suffolk, back to the Hood, over to the Norfolk, etc, etc.

Each ship includes many of its own stations, as in SS2, such the Bridge, Radar, assign the various guns on your ship to specific targets, the damage screen, torpedoes and so on. A random game generator will also be included to throw up a number of hypothetical battles that might just conjure up some impressive `what if...' scenarios!

Bismark's pedigree signifies that this game will be a true simulation with as many true-to-life options and details as possible. Due for release during July, Bismark has the capability to be a `game of the year'. We will see.

1992 sees SSI paying due homage to the genre that got the company off the ground in the first place. The quality of these new releases appear to be high, SSI and many wargaming fans will hope that the sales are too.

Paul Rigby

We must be....

MANIACS

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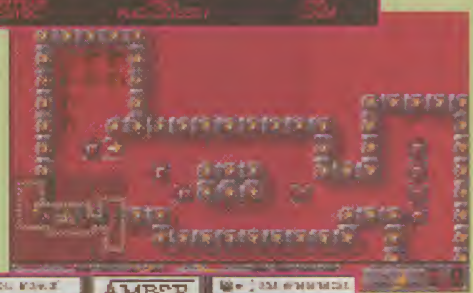

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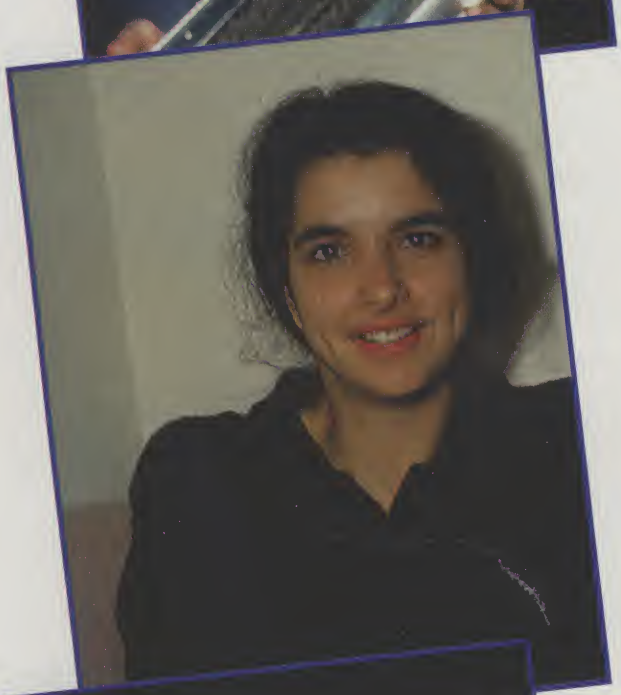


Rik Henderson trave
company that hopes
other games publish
Davy takes the snap

PRO

SALES CURVE/STOR

It's taken a heck of a time and extremely gigantic quantities of moolah to elevate Clapham Junction to the state it's in now, and it's still crap! Fortunately, I don't have to travel there very often, and when I do I'm usually rescued from the obscene, bird-dropping spattered ticket hall by enthusiastically friendly staff members of The Sales Curve, and whisked off to far better surroundings and a warm mug of coffee at Storm HQ.

It is here that, in January 1988, The Sales Curve was founded with the intention that it could be a liaison point and marketing consultant for European and American software companies who wanted to make an impact on the British market - which it happily and successfully managed for such companies as Linel and Accolade.

Shortly after this time, it also set up a programming arm to its operations to offer a production service for other publishers, called Random Access, which both Virgin and Ocean made use of over a period of three years. And this proved to be just a precursor for the ultimate decision to create the Storm label, and publish games itself.

The Storm label is reserved for, and has achieved. the status of quality in preference to quantity - there have been few releases, but on the whole they've been well received.
Also, when selecting a product to release, Jane Cavanagh ('ver boss) is more often than not going to select something that has a large public identity, before programming has even started - in fact, SWIV is the only original product in a current list of seven (although it's probably been Storm's finest moment to date).

In the future the company is set to concentrate slightly on its new found Nintendo license, but Amiga productivity is set to remain at a healthy level for some time yet, and in the next year you're more than likely to see one original product, a film license, and another arcade machine, and if the quality is of the Sales Curve's usual high standard it's worth baiting your breath, tightening your trousers and holding on really tightly for when they attack the software shelves.

Programmed as Random Access for other publishers:

Continental Circus - Virgin

A rather average arcade racing game. It was a conversion of a machine that's best feature was really the use of 3D glasses - suffice to say that the Amiga version didn't have this option.

Narc - Ocean

avels to the software
pes to rain on every
olishers' parade. Jeff
nappies.

DFILE

STORM AMIGOLOGY

A fairly mediocre beat-em-up/shoot-em-up that was a tad too hard for its own good.

Judge Dredd - Virgin

The first game based on the comic strip hero that reached the grade. It was a good blend of arcade adventure and shoot-em-up.

Silkworm - Virgin

One of the best horizontally scrolling shooties in existence.

Gemini Wing - Virgin

Er, a bit forgettable this one. It tried so hard to be a reasonable vertically scrolling blaster, but failed horribly.

Ninja Warriors - Virgin

Walk, walk, walk and slice. Typical arcade slash-em-up that was quite good fun at the time.

On the Storm label:

Saint Dragon

A stormer (snort!) of a debut release. It was based on an arcade machine not many people had heard of, but was very adequately coded. A competent horizontally-scrolling shoot-em-up.

SWIV

THE best vertically-scrolling shooty and no mistake.

Rod-land

Cute pixies in a very good platform game arcade conversion.

Final Blow

Not the best arcade boxing game on the market, but certainly not the worst either.

Double Dragon III

Beat-em-ups personified. So good, for this genre, that it'd make your toes curl.

Big Run

A rather average car racing game.

Indy Heat

Top-down car racing with more playability than you can shake a scabby stick at.

STORM PRO FILE

COLOUR TEST

Having cornered Nadia Singh (Press and Marketing) and Jane Cavanagh (Managing Director) in a rather pink room - with very comfy sofas, I must add - I set about trying to analyse them both with the patented Rik Henderson Freudian colour test type thang.

The idea behind it is that I mention a colour, and they both have to blurt out the first thing that comes into their heads that relates to it - oh well, it's worth giving it a go anyway...

Blue
Jane: The sky!

Red
Jane: Anger.
Nadia: Blood.

Green
Jane: Grass.
Nadia: Yep, grass. Picnics.

Yellow
Jane and Nadia (in unison): Buttercups - to go with the picnic.

Black
Nadia: Burnt matches.
Jane: Death (at this point a huge conversation about morbidity ensued, revealing that Jane is rarely bothered by the idea of death, but Nadia is a bit petrified of such things. It was also determined the Nadia would like to come back as a cat, if reincarnated, and Jane would reappear as a three-toed sloth).

White
Jane: Snow. Skiing holidays.
Nadia: Cotton-wool.

Ultra-violet
Nadia: Discos! Naff people in discos with bad cases of dandruff.
Jane: Butchers shops.

THE ANALYSIS: Er, I'll be buggered if I know!

Devastating new video games from Storm.

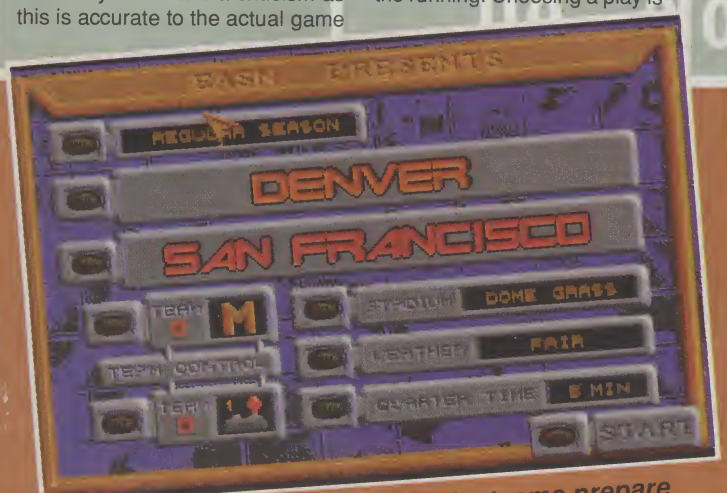
Hi Troops, I'm just off to the Comput
BOP
ERK!
NYEH
heh
HOO HOO
HYUK
RRRRRRRRR
BORIS
HOO HOO HOO
HOO HOO
Phew! I guess THE MANIAC has been messing around with the letters page again...
Pssst!
Pssst!
Want to buy some consssole gamess?
PUSH
PULL
PRESS!
NOT while the Commodore Crusader* draws breath!
VOZ!
Would you care to repeat that, Dodgy Geezer?
Time I wasssn't here...
WHIZZ
Hey BORIS! Fancy a little target practice?
HYUK
HEEHOO HOO
?!
eek
RRRRRR
BZZZZZZZZZZZZ
AIEEE
RRRR
Gruesome!
Later, Troops!
* Cheers-DI STEFANO Ed says the goodies are in the post!

JOHN MADDE

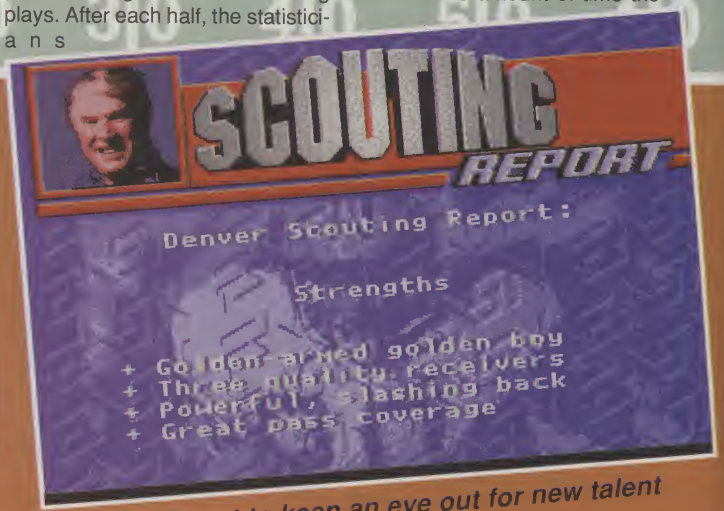
Griddier than a cattle grid and containing more iron than a scrapyard. John appeared on the good old Commodore 64 a couple of years ago. Not only di sport, it was playable and very good graphically.

Now the Amiga version has appeared and it's even better, although it's gained a label from its country of origin (presumably to set it apart from the plethora of British soccer titles). Just like in Kick Off, you may alter length of quarters, pick a team and type of pitch and the level of competition you prefer, before the game or season begins. Then you're in control of the roughest, toughest people ever to wear padding in their bras... For the uninitiated, American football involves itself with the distance a ball travels towards the opposition's goal line. To aid the many statisticians with their complex breakdowns of the game, the pitch is divided up by yards and is 90 yards long from goal line to goal line. The idea is to carry the ball into the goal area, or endzone, which scores a touchdown and six points, or kick a field goal over the posts for three points. An extra, shorter kick is attempted for another point to add to the six when a touchdown is scored. The idea is simple, but there are hundreds of rules and types of play, many of which are very complex and difficult to follow on TV! John Madden sticks to the letter in this. In fact, sometimes the ball is lost among a crowd of heaving players! This is by no means a criticism as this is accurate to the actual game anyway. The graphics? Fabulous, that's the only superlative I'll use. Every player moves well, shadows are used to good effect and details from goal posts to referees are featured. Team colours are true to life too. Amazing. Off- field still screens are also used to great effect. One thing that won't disappoint buyers of John Madden is the presentation - although the crowd noise is a little timid. There is some rousing speech included too. Appearances are all very well, but in most cases they don't make a good game great. What matters most of all to me is gameplay. American football involves a lot of tactical manoeuvres and pre- planning: this is at least half of the battle. Once you've chosen the correct play (and they're all here), you can opt to let the computer work out the moves for you as best it can, or take the joystick yourself and do the running. Choosing a play is done by selecting an option from those presented to you in windows at the top of the screen. These may be scrolled left and right using the joystick, then chosen by pressing and holding fire, holding left, up or right and then releasing fire. This sounds unwieldy, but it's easy to get used to and works well in practise. Plays with brown backgrounds are passes and those with yellow backgrounds are running plays. After each half, the statisticians do what they know best, presenting breakdowns of passing and rushing yardage, turnovers, score for each quarter, inside leg measurement of the quarterbacks, et cetera et cetera ad nauseam. These do become interesting when you're half way through a season and they can outline areas of weakness and strength in your play. Perhaps the most interesting of all is the amount of time the

It´s party in the endzone time



You select your options as the teams prepare for battle



You´ve got to keep an eye out for new talent

EN FOOTBALL

John Madden Football was a smash hit when it first ly did it feature all aspects of the violent American

teams are in possession. It doesn't always follow that the team which holds the ball the most is winning... John Madden American Football stands head, shoulders and belly-button above anything else of its ilk that's been produced for home computers. Without exaggerating, it's got everything. Fans of American football will love it. Non-fans of American football will wonder what's going on for a few minutes, read the excellent tutorials in the manual and love it too. What's more, it may convert some players to watching the real thing on Channel 4. And why not? A superb implementation of a superb sport. I'm off to get kitted out for another season.

Ashley Cotter-Cairns

RATING

John Madden Football

RANKING

▶ 001 ◀

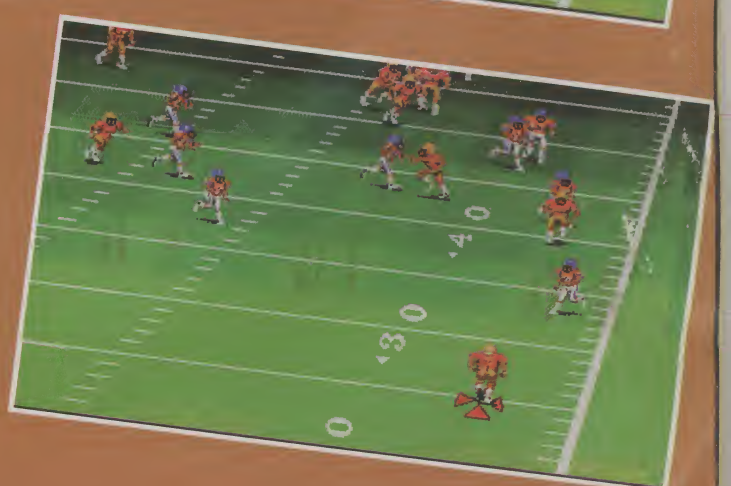
PRODUCER: Electronic Arts
SUPPLIER: Electronic Arts
GENRE: Sport
PRICE: £ 25.99

GAME-PLAY	96%
SOUND	90%
GRAPHICS	94%
LONG-EVITY	80%
OVERALL	93%

TECHN. DATA

COMPATIBILITY	SUPPORTS:
☑ AMIGA 500	☑ HARD-DISC
☑ AMIGA 500 plus	☑ 2.DRIVE
☑ AMIGA 600	☑ 1 MB RAM
☐ requires	DEVICE: JOYSTICK

A quick huddle with the team as you decide your next strategy



The Isles of Terra, not the sort of place you'd choose to take a holiday... in fact, the only celebration you'd want to consider there would be your own funeral. That's exactly what will be happening soon unless you - and the obligatory band of adventurers - solve the latest set of problems, discover the root of the evil, blah de blah de blah...

NOT a Dungeon Master, d

If you've ever played a Might and Magic game, you'll know that the emphasis is heavily weighted on roleplaying and not speed of reactions. Which you may not have guessed from looking at the screenshots: To all but those who have played M&M3, it resembles yet another of those Dungeon Master clones which have become extremely popular - and common - in recent times.

They say two heads are better than one but this woman has four and all she spouts is water

No, this game relies on the speed of the player's mind, not his fingers. Another thing it relies on is patience, because in a similar way to Black Crypt you have to format 'play' and 'game' disks via Workbench. Then the main M&M3 disk is needed to create both of these disks. Afterwards, the game will have to be loaded too. The whole process takes fifteen minutes or more.Then there's the game itself, M&M2 had the advantage over similar games in that it played very fast.

To access a menu, all you had to do was hit a key and there it was. Okay, the game wasn't the prettiest thing to grace an Amiga. M&M3 answers the problem of appearance but the decision to smarten up Might and Magic has caused it to be SLOW. Almost every action accesses one of the five M&M or two game disks (onto which you may only save three game positions...).Slow it may be, but mindgame players tend to have more patience than your average shootie addict. What matters now is the quality and, happily, the game won't let you down in that department. I won't bore you with statistics about thousands of square playing miles or a myriad of monster types.

Might and Magic has changed in its latest incarnation and for the better.Previously near-static screens, like the tavern, training ground and blacksmith's shop, now have high quality animated scenes within them.

These are well-drawn and colourful, displaying good use of imagination without excessive repetition between towns. Menus have been much improved, with icons used to represent items. The F1-F8 keys are used to change between the characters and hirelings, speeding up the purchasing and bartering processes no end.Combat has changed too.

Although you still have the options of fighting, running, or casting spells, there's a Quick fight option, this automatically controls each character running a preset action which you defined earlier. This can

It looks like a load of junk but it beats thumping an Ork in the mouth with your bear hands

Those ever vital statistics

Looks like a nice place to visit but some of the inhabitants are decidedly hostile

er, despite appearances....

speed things up a little, but clicking on each player individually doesn't take too much longer. Having said that, the usual disk accesses take place, which makes choosing new spells somewhat laborious.Monsters enjoy a higher level of animation, though this makes the mouse clicks less responsive.

Combat order has been simplified, with the names of monsters 'queing' in a box at the top right of the display. Their condition varies according to the colour of their name, from white (good health) to red (near death) and this is mirrored by coloured bars below the characters' boxes which change as their health does.Might and Magic III has improved on its predecessor in a number of ways. I mentioned that the appearance has been smartened up and in this department the sequel wins. It also triumphs in quality of design. There are so many ways to play M&M3.

You can use keyboard shortcuts, a combination of mouse and keyboard or just the rodent on its own.But there are times that you'll wish for the speed of other roleplaying games. This won't be too often in the game, but it will test your patience threshold when loading or saving games.

A pity, for speed would have iced a very good cake. I'd still suggest that thinking roleplayers rush out and buy a copy. If you're not sure, give it a whirl. You may be converted.

Ashley Cotter-Cairns

Now that´s what I call game over

RATING

MIGHT&MAGIC III

RANKING

▶ 003 ◀

PRODUCER: Electronic Arts
SUPPLIER: Electronic Arts
GENRE: Roleplaying
PRICE: £ 40.99

GAME-PLAY	83%
SOUND	84%
GRAPHICS	90%
LONG-EVITY	90%
OVERALL	84%

Where are those turtles when you really need them

TECHN. DATA

COMPATIBILITY

- ☑ AMIGA 500
- ☑ AMIGA 500 plus
- ☑ AMIGA 600
- ☑ requires 1 MEG

SUPPORTS:

- ☑ HARD-DISC
- ☑ 2.DRIVE
- ☑ 1 MB RAM

DEVICE: Mouse/Keyboard

A grim bunch of baddies indeed

POOLS OF DARKNESS

Let the battle commence

Ever had the feeling things are starting to get on top of you

Pools of Darkness (POD), for 1 Meg Amigas, is the fourth (and last) chapter in the "Forgotten Realms" series of games from SSI.

In POD, Lord Bane has enlisted four allies to help him conquer the land. Although all seems lost, there exists one small chance to undo this foul handiwork. Each of Bane's four allies has their base in a different area of the astral plane, and to reach the portals to these alternate dimensions your party must first overcome the forces guarding them in Moonsea.

After defeating each force protecting a portal, you gain access to a completely different realm through a Pool of Darkness. Every portal also allows you to stop at the wizard Elminster's camp in Limbo, where you may train, rest, be healed, and store items. Whatever items you find, however powerful, can't survive the passage back through Limbo; once you decide to explore a new dimension, you must usually stay until the mission is complete.

The Moonsea region contains many side quests, and the party can spend much time here amassing experience, wealth, and magical items. Each of the outer dimensions also has a set of quests to gain items and equip the party, plus each of the realms has a unique terrain to traverse. For example, Tanetal rules a 'land' composed of the god Moander's body. The party can explore his ear, hair, mouth, feet (urrgh), and the sleeping titan's heart (reaching for the sick-bag), where Tanetal hangs out! Throughout the game, the party meets characters that it may or may not allow to join the party to aid in the completion of certain quests. The characters must also make many other choices of action that can alter the course of the game slightly, or can change the difficulty of an upcoming battle.

You may choose to tackle at least one more mission after the forces of Bane are defeated. For those crazy people who still didn't get enough, there is the additional bonus of "Dave's Challenge," a maze of monsters and puzzles that has become a standard feature of SSI's 'Gold Box' AD&D games.

Copy protection consists of looking up a word in either the Rule Book or Adventurer's Journal. Unlike some of the previous games from SSI, no code wheel is required, nor are you asked to read any of the Journal Entries to find the correct word (which reduces the temptation to read an entry before it is needed). Also eliminated in this game is the occasional extra question asked when saving the game, an annoying feature.

The overland maps of the different realms are colourful as are the character/monster portraits and magic special effects. The pregenerated party included with the game is very well suited to this adventure, and I was able to play at Champion level until the last sequence of battles in Gothmene's palace. One problem with POD is that the endgame is completely unbalanced. Even after lowering the difficulty level all the way to Novice, only one of my characters was left standing. Almost every one of the enemy in the first battle breathes lightning, then the survivors face a force of Beholders, which is immediately followed by a horde of Bane's Minions. No rest is allowed between the three last battles, and no magic is allowed in the final fight. The Blue Minions in that encounter have a Fire Shield in effect, making any melee combat suicide. The endgame is indeed challenging...but unfair!

After Bane is defeated, the characters may rescue Mulmaster from rampaging beasts or tackle "Dave's Challenge." When all is done, the Realms are at peace and the party may sail the Fine Ship into the sunset, leaving the Forgotten Realms. Thus, the series comes full circle, with only the party and Elminster having any memory of the near-victory of Bane. This was a little aggravating and seemed to have a familiar ring to it making the endgame rather flat.

Paul Rigby

RATING

Pools of Darkness

RANKING ▶ 010 ◀

PRODUCER:	SSI
SUPPLIER:	U.S. Gold
GENRE:	Roleplaying
PRICE:	£ 32.99

GAME-PLAY	68%
SOUND	69%
GRAPHICS	76%
LONG-EVITY	70%
OVERALL	70%

TECHN. DATA

COMPATIBILITY
- ☑ AMIGA 500
- ☑ AMIGA 500 plus
- ☑ AMIGA 600
- ☑ requires 1 Meg

SUPPORTS:
- ☑ HARD-DISC
- ☑ 2.DRIVE
- ☑ 1 MB RAM

DEVICE: Mouse

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Lords o

Lost is one thing. Lost in time is quite another... Oops. This is one flight that you'll wish you'd never taken. No in-flight meal with inedible puddings either, but I'd eat a whole trayful to be somewhere other than here.

Orders were to investigate a strange storm, but there should not have been land where I finally crashed. Now there'sjust the wreckage of the plane and a first-aid kit to keep mecompany. Wait a minute - what's that man wearing a skirt forand why is he advancing towards me with glazed eyes?Lords ofTime lands you (quite literally) in the middle of a mysteriousquirk in the space/time continuum. For some reason, youmanaged to crash land in a foreign time as well as place. Nowyou are faced with the fairly important task of staying alive,not to mention the only slightly less pressing problem of howto find out where you are and how to get out of wherever it isyou are.Lords of Time is a graphical and text adventurequite unlike anything I've seen before. For one thing, thegraphics are drawn from a very strange angle indeed. It looksa little like the view in those 3D exploration arcadeadventures, except how I suppose they'd look if viewed throughan empty milk bottle (having never actually played one withmilk bottles in front of my face, I can only assume...). Mostodd.There's a lot of green here. Obviously, in a time beforevehicles such as the wrecked plane and other pollutant modesof transport, not to mention several hundred years before theinvention of reinforced concrete, things were prettyunspoilt. I had to smile as my man began his trot at a drunkenangle across the screen - quite honestly, I thought I'd loadeda golf game instead of an adventure. It's got that feel aboutit.Before play begins, you have to roll a character. Thecomputer generates ability scores and if you want you may reroll them. Then you watch the intro - whether you want to ornot, as there's no way to skip it - before arriving next toyour plane and first aid kit. Control is done using thejoystick and the spacebar to call up a commands menu. Fromhere, you may select an inventory, pick up or drop and examineor use an item. It's a little annoying though, as the menudisappears whenever you've performed an action, which meanspressing space again if you want to do something else.Youstart with a knife to defend yourself, although there is asword some way to the south (if you're strong enough to wieldit). You'll need to do some fighting, as health-sapping priests, undead, spiders and more strange beasts appear and will track you doggedly if you don't make a stand and facethem. Merely pressing fire makes your character perform quitea nifty series of swashbuckling sword movements, which isentertaining to watch, if a little inaccurate with aknife. You may come across some interesting locations, like a village and a ruined temple, complete with maze, to explore and loot. People seem very casual about locking their homes and you can usually root about in them to your heart'scontent. It's not worth taking such liberties in the shopsthough, as you'll probably come unstuck if you turn tothieving here. Better to spend a little of your gold, poncedfrom the bodies of the monsters you've killed. Not killed anyyet? Then go get them.All this action is very well, but thestrange perspective of Lords of Time makes what should befairly easy on-screen tasks laborious and challenging. The menu problem sounds trivial, but it can make the difference between life and death in a tight corner with monsters closing in. Food seemed hard to come by and a death by starvation was an unhappy end for my character. That said, Lords of Timeoffers a big, colourful adventure for fans of alternativeworlds and will not easily be beaten, which means I can recommend it for lasting interest if nothing else. It does getaddictive, although that's coming from someone who finds adventures fun. If you don't enjoy this sort of game then givethis a miss.

Ashley Cairns

# of time

I've woken in worse places but I always had my paddle

The people round here don't seem to value their money that much

There must be some guy wandering around here with a huge hole in his pocket and money to burn

RATING

Lords of Time

RANKING

▶ 006 ◀

PRODUCER: Hollyware Entertainment
SUPPLIER: The Software Business
GENRE: Adventure
PRICE: £25.99

GAME-PLAY	79%
SOUND	68%
GRAPHICS	82%
LONG-EVITY	76%
OVERALL	78%

TECHN. DATA

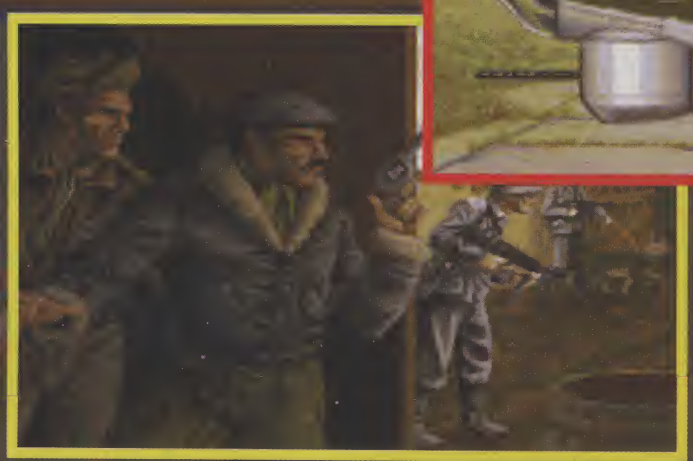
COMPATIBILITY	SUPPORTS:
☑ AMIGA 500	❑ HARD-DISC
☑ AMIGA 500 plus	☑ 2.DRIVE
☑ AMIGA 600	☑ 1 MB RAM
❑ requires HD	DEVICE: JOYSTICK

B 17

Seen `Memphis Belle' yet? That film was not so much about the gallant crew who braved the 25 missions that encompassed a full tour over the heated skies of wartime Germany in the Second World War but the aircraft they flew in - `Memphis Belle' a Boeing B-17 Flying Fortress.

The real thing is still alive and kicking today, incidentally. Microprose are set to re-enact one of those treacherous tours with the release of their latest flight simulation `B-17 Flying Fortress'. The premise to the simulation is to hand-pick a specialised crew, cram them into the said B-17 (a `G' model with the added chin turret) and try to emulate the crew of that star of the silver screen `Memphis Belle' by completing the required 25 missions that constitutes a full tour.

Missions, which all take place during daylight hours, will vary from hitting factories and industrial areas to low-level attacks on submarine pens. `You will be given a primary mission, but if the weather is too bad then you will be given an alternative,' noted Mike Brunton, games designer. There are around 150 areas that can be bombed. However, it is likely that you will be assigned a specific area to bomb rather than you taking a random choice. `We might put an option in where you can decline missions if you wish. That hasn't been finalised, yet, and is really a gameplay tweak depending on whether it is found to be a real pain in the butt. If you try to fly and you are always getting long, laborious missions or we may decide to work in a sort of difficulty level-type thing where the higher the level you select the worse the areas you have to bomb. But that is something we can play about with,' said Brunton. At the moment you are unable to influence the `campaign' during your tour to the bitter end. There is the possibility of continuing past the 25 mission mark to fly further tours, possibly for a higher rank or that, previously unattainable, medal. Your crew is essential to the success of your tour, `They all have separate skills,' commented Peter Woods, quality assurance chappie to the project, `they are good at certain things, bad at other things. Guys will be replaced as they are killed but the replacements will not be as capable.' In fact each crew-member will improve, skill-wise, as the tour progresses. Each member of the crew has a set of statistics but you cannot see them directly, `I'm not a believer of giving people numbers if they are unrealistic,' added Mike Brunton. Even though these computer controlled characters do their job well you are able to flick from position to position to take control at the most critical periods if you wish. `It's a bit like M1 Tank Platoon,' commented Woods, `where you can take control of the guns or, if you leave them alone they'll return to computer control.' `If the crew member is unconscious you can ask another crew member to move through the aircraft to take up that position,' added Mike Brunton, `once they're there you can issue instructions to them such as `man the guns', `apply first aid', `drop the bombs' and so on.' Unfortunately however, the artificial intelligence has not been extended to other aircraft. It would



have been nice, for example, to be able to interact with the other bombers in the pack during the flight to a particular target and back. Also, there will be escort fighters (Mustangs I presume). However, again, the will be no chance of contact between you and them. Not essential, sure, but it would have been appreciated in a game were team-work is paramount. The graphics are being worked upon by Vektor Grafix. I assume that we will see a similar system to that used in their Shuttle simulation. Hopefully a `working' cockpit will result, full of toggled switches and push buttons. We will have to await the final design decision on that one. Mike Brunton did offer, however, that there, `...are three screensworth of instruments for the control panel, left/centre/right.' One pleasing feature of this game is the addition of a layered damage control system. That is, you will not experience a `five hits and you're shot out of the sky' situation. In B-17 your engine(s) may be hit and destroyed or they may catch fire. Any fires that are not countered may spread resulting in the wing melting and breaking off. You can attempt to utilise the extinguisher systems, though. There will be aileron failures, rudder failures, etc, Reportedly, the flight model of the B-17 is accurate via data gleaned from relevant literature.`The B-17 actually does feel like it has weigh to it. It doesn't fly like a fighter or anything like that. It feels like you are flying 25 tons of aeroplane.' said Woods. I never heard any reports of researchers taking the opportunity to take a trip in one of the last remaining airworthy B-17s to attain realism. Mad fools! That would have been my first move, I'll tell you. Other aspects of the aircraft are simplified to some extent. The bomb load is standardised as Brunton explains, `We haven't worried about the real bomb-loads that they carried. You always carry 10 500-lb bombs. You never worry about the mixes of loads they used to carry like incendiaries, very large bombs and that kind of stuff.' Also things like navigation is `made easy' as are the gunnery positions. The gun sights are good quality, the ammunition does not have to be re-loaded and so on. Welcome gimmicks include the option of naming your own plane (your name is registered below the cockpit framing) and the choice of nose-art, visible flak, etc. `We've got 16 different decals [nose art] to choose from.' Also, Microprose have reported that they have included a fairly wide list of 8th Air Force bases so if and when you complete your mission you will be able to land at any one. B-17 Flying Fortress, which is scheduled for this Summer (price details have yet to be fixed) continues a welcome fashion in aircraft simulations that was initiated with 360's Megafortress. That is, to simulate large aircraft. Aircraft that has, previously, been tagged `boring' with little promise of gameplay. Megafortress is set to prove them all wrong. Let us hope that Microprose continue to buck that view, too, so encouraging others to venture into this exciting area of flight simulation.

Paul Rigb

SIM ANT

Novel? I'll say. SimAnt is deceptively simple and rather intriguing. The package, from the producers of Sim City and Sim Earth, casts you in the role of the Yellow Ant, commander of a black ant colony. By defeating your human and insect enemies, plus rival red ants and other perils, the black ants can succeed as masters of the universe that is.. [dramatic chord]...the back yard!

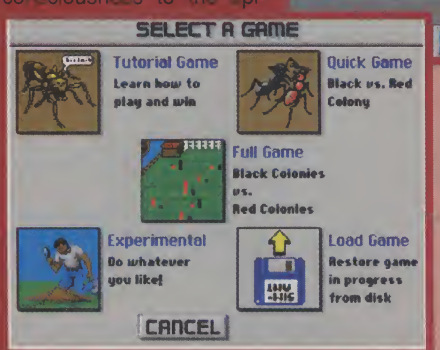
To be honest SimAnt won't blast the socks off the game jockeys who are used to warping off on a mission to save the galaxy from an evil empire. For everybody else, SimAnt will draw you to the monitor like a Eve to her first apple - you don't know whether you're going to like it but you're willing to try it to find out. The Yellow Ant, that's you, starts all critical decisions about the colony's life. For example, the Yellow Ant enlists fellow ants to forage for food, fight, dig nests and post guards near food. The Yellow Ant can pick things up and put them down, handy for building pebble barricades against the red ants. When a particular action is completed the Yellow Ant can release all or some of the recruits to go about their business.

Leading an army is a dangerous duty. The Yellow Ant meets death in a variety of ways: spider jaws, ant combat, being chewed to pieces by an ant lion or finding itself chopped up by a lawnmower (gruesome, blood-curdling sounds and graphics can be toggled off). Although the Yellow Ant dies often you're not penalised for dying as you are re-incarnated from another egg.

The Yellow Ant has the power to transfer it's player-control to any other live adult black ant - so you can become a powerful, jaw-flexing, soldier-ant defending the colony against the foe. You can even transfer your consciousness to the spider, but its actions are limited to 'you look like food, chomp.'

There are three levels of play with increasingly faster speed modes if you're in a hurry. The Quick Game puts you in charge of a black colony against one red colony. You have to gather as much food as possible - quickly attack the red ants and their queen. This game normally takes around an hour to play.

The Full Game begins like the Quick Game but the play is more complex. Victory means taking over the back yard by overcoming the afore-mentioned perils and the red ants plus their colonies and queens and, finally, driving the humans from the scene by infesting their home. Other hazards include insecticides, ant- crushing human feet and rain which can flood ant nests.



Select your pleasure

In the Experimental Game you can customise the playing area just to see what happens. For example, you can upset the balance of power by creating more red ants than black, place scent trails, alarm trails, obstacles, food in difficult to get areas and include mazes to see how the ants respond.

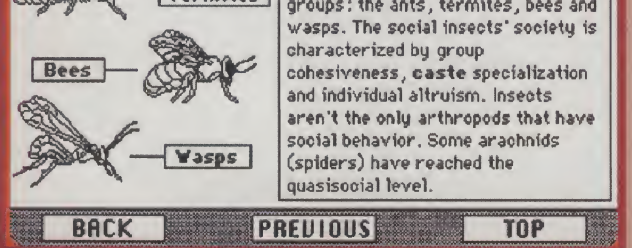
An on-screen tutorial provides you with a basic understanding for controlling the Yellow Ant and the colonies behaviour. Giving orders is done by a well-designed set of icons and keyboard commands. Report and information windows are everywhere.

SimAnt appears easy to get into but a complex and entertaining simulation of ant life all the same. This is so - for a few hours. However, once you get to grips with the gameplay and complete the Full Game, which will only take you several hours, you may wish to dabble with the Experimental mode for a bit and then...well, that's it. You will then re-box the game and file it away never to be seen again. SimAnt does not have the long-term gameplay to be totally recommended. Sim Earth had the same problem. Sim Earth was a cracking piece of simulation programming - but no lasting gameplay. SimAnt is another excellent piece of simulation programming based on a wonderfully original idea with a simple but highly effective interface but with little meat to actually keep you interested for more than a few hours.

I would recommend Maxis take a close look at their design briefs for their next batch of releases. Maxis, be advised, you may be selling your products to statistical and educational simulation users, but we games players are getting a little frustrated.

Paul Rigby

(Note: Pics are from hi-res mode - Ed.)



RATING

SimAnt

RANKING ▶ 011 ◀

PRODUCER: Maxis
SUPPLIER: Ocean
GENRE: Simulation
PRICE: £ 34.99

GAME-PLAY	58%
SOUND	71%
GRAPHICS	80%
LONG-EVITY	50%
OVERALL	70%

TECHN. DATA

COMPATIBILITY
- ☑ AMIGA 500
- ☑ AMIGA 500 plus
- ☑ AMIGA 600
- ☑ requires 1 Meg

SUPPORTS:
- ☑ HARD-DISC
- ☑ 2.DRIVE
- ☑ 1 MB RAM

DEVICE: Mouse

DIE HARD 2

They missed him in the first film now you have a chance to even the score and prevent a possible Hudson Hawk 2.

It´s blast a baddie time

I´d leg it to if I were in his position

It´s grab the film licence and produce a game as Grandslam prepare to batle it out with the big boys. There can be few amongst you who did not watch and enjoy the first film but were mildly disappointed with the second. It wasn´t because the second film was so bad mearly a case of the first film being a little too good.

The game, like the film, starts in an airport. Here our reluctant hero finds two suspicious characters fiddling around with the luggage. As in any good action film a gun battle ensues. In the film you had two bad guys, in the game they brought along a few friends. You may be forgiven for thinking the game bears a remarkable similarity to Operation Wolf and its many clones, but lets face it it, does. Taking control of a lone set of gunsights you blast the baddies as they appear amongst the luggage. Hit the luggage and you can be rewarded with extra ammo, a bigger gun, or the all powerful grenades.

What I want to know, is do they seal him in the areoplane and throw in the grenades? Just sit tight and imagine the end of a promising film career.

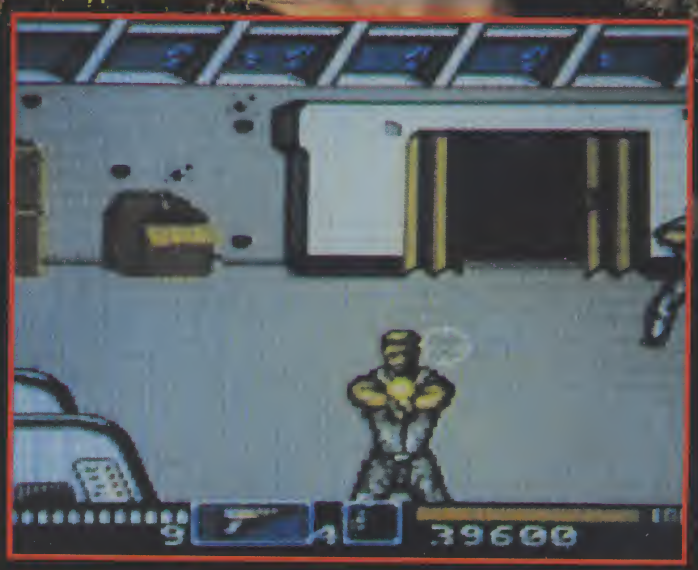
As you progress through the game certain scenes from the film are replayed in, yes you've guessed it, true Operation Wolf style. Mind you Grandslam is not the first to do this many notable games have trod this weary path, most notetably Predator from Image Works, (and look what happened to them).

I´m not saying it´s a bad game just because the format is unoriginal, in fact I´m not saying it´s a bad game at all, I´m just a little disappointed that the software houses continually stick to a safe format when they get a big license.

Having got that off my chest and blasted my way through the airport luggage control we take a stroll outside. Throughout the game we see the familiar, move the gunsights and blast formula but now instead of grenades we have the more devastating rocket launcher. Great for that really close up work.

Like the film or not this looks to be a good solid game of fast reflexes and wholesale slaughter.

Adrian Pumphrey

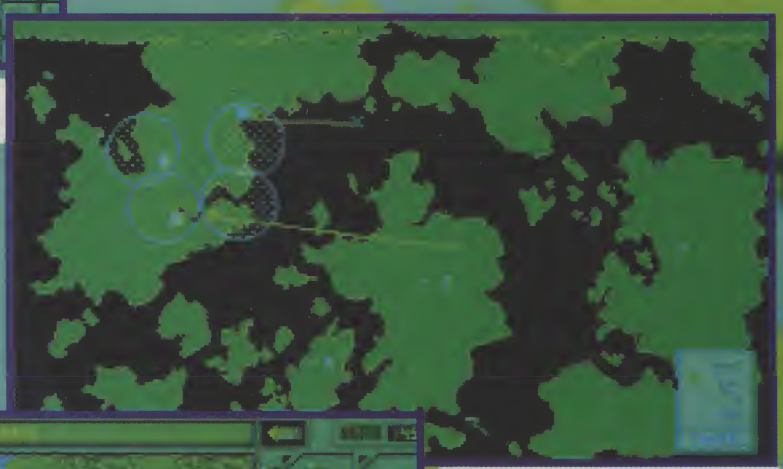


The words `new' and `computer game' relate, most of the time, like oil and water - very badly. Sim City was one of those exceptions and it introduced a wealth of `god games' that include Sim Earth, Mega-Lo-Mania et al. Now, via Electronic Arts, Millennium are to step onto the ever burgeoning band-wagon with their new `environmental simulator', Global Effect.

GLO EFF

Millennium are confident that their product will stand out from the growing crowd of `god' games. In fact Millennium's Toby Simpson, Global Effect's designer, stepped into the fray to try and convince me of the fact. According to Toby Simpson the game will, "...simulate a very large world. The game looks after the atmospheric contents such as carbon dioxide, ozone, pollution, stuff like that. It looks after coastal erosion, seismic activity, volcanoes, earthquakes and so on. This system is continually maintained until the human player decides he wants to do something - such as building a civilisation. It is at this point that the rather delicate balance is completely upset." This human intervention then sparks the beginning of the tussle with nature as you build whilst trying not to ruin the environment. A tough job in itself and one that is made more complicated by the fact that you have another player (computer operated or a human player via a modem link) who is trying his damnedest to make his civilization more superior than your own. War is always a possibility as is the Bomb. However, the `winner' has to deal with the environmental after-effects. A tough job and one that has a good chance of failing. As Toby muses, "A couple of the testing games I've had with the Development Director here have resulted in mutual destruction. Where we've actually blown ourselves up completely. The thing I've found is that war is an extremely easy thing to start but it's mighty difficult to know when to stop." The setting for Global Effect has you as a member of a slightly futuristic `Civilisation Squad'. Your job is to either create new civilisations or help existing civilisations that may be in trouble. As such, the game is divided into three sections: Save a World, Rule a World and Create a World. The former two options has you playing with an existing situation that you have to defuse. So, for example, you may be playing in a post-nuclear war situation. In this situation you would be constricted with a finite amount or time and power to turn the situation around. So what of your powers? You, in fact, can assume manual control of any general area of your civilisation. However, if you adopt a hands-off approach the civilization will carry on regardless. However, the environment is always working against you. So, without your influence the civilization will not last long. This is were Global Effect diverges from the likes of Sim Earth. It places the player above any technicalities to retain the essential gameplay - because this

I didn´t think one more coal mine would have such a dramatic effect



The winner gets to clean-up afterwards

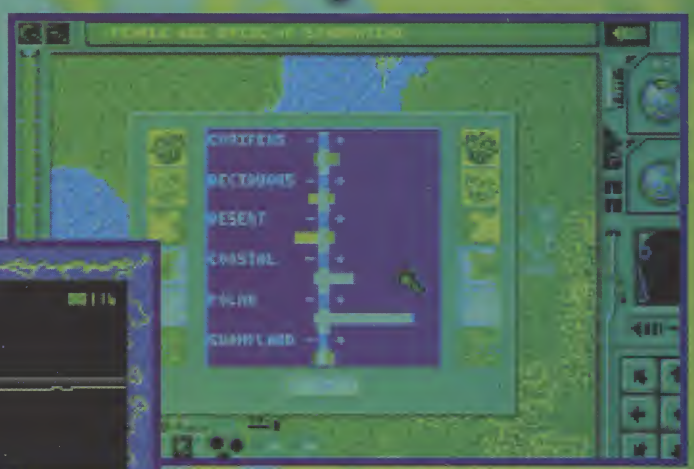
Nuclear power may be risky but accidents apart it´s a lots cleaner than coal

OBAL ECT

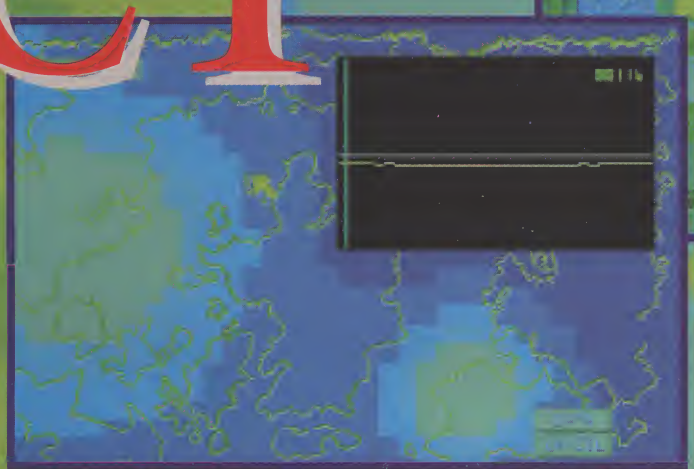
is, essentially, a game and not a simulation as Sim Earth is. "Likewise you do not have to worry about the economics of running a city. You're not worrying about tax, population or crime - you're above that as well. You're dealing with civilizations and cities as entities and in relation to an environmental point of view rather than an economical point of view."

Specific controls include the ability to create nuclear power stations. However, before the power station is built you would need to find an uranium source, survey a potential power station site (to see if it is seismically stable, for example), then build the thing. After you had installed this `clean' source of power you may then decide to knock down all of your highly polluting coal-fire power stations. This creation and destruction power also applies to natural resources. For example, you can plant forests (although they must be planted in the right areas otherwise they will die) to stop one of your cities expanding. You can set up green-belts and national parks and so on. Many reports and graphs aid you in making your decisions. For example you can check on your air pollution, the global temperature (the carbon dioxide coverage), the ozone layer, you can see if you are contaminating land (from over pollution or via combat), the varying height of the sea level, whether your polar caps are retreating or expanding and so on. To help you become quickly familiar with the game and its interface you have the ability to program the function keys to initiate specific actions. There are also reports which use a more direct approach. For example specific information can be gleaned from individual items or installations. A report may state that a particular nuclear power station is not working because it does not have a fresh water supply. The game does not leave you scratching your head, therefore. It always gives you a push in the right direction. In addition, messages continually pop-up letting you know what is going on. The combat can be taken down to tactical levels. So much so, that you can play the game as a wargame. Targets can be selected, ships and aircraft can be assigned `missions', nuclear or conventional armaments can be chosen and direct control can be taken over any unit, such as a missile, early warning stations can be constructed, etc. You can actually steer units to the target if you wish. The downside of concentrating too much on the combat is that your cities and the environment may be falling apart whilst you have your mind set on your enemy. One of the major problems with Maxis's Sim Earth was the lack of any gameplay. Interest in Sim Earth is initially high but wanes quickly as this product is a complex situation - not a game. Global Effect takes the opposite tack by tackling the environmental subject as a theme for a playable game, leaving the simulation to the computer. In fact you can play Global Effect both as a peaceful environmental game, a wargame or a bit of both. Only extended play will reveal whether Millennium have succeeded in their endeavour. Watch out for the final review in a future issue.

Your pride and joy, but what does the environment think



The stuff that land is made of



Flat is good, it´s when the curves go up you really have to start worrying

There´s an awful lot of land, can you really pollute all that with just one city?

Whether you're a terrorist or not, you will probably be able to identify with the wish to destroy things. If you can find as many as four friends, all of you can destroy each other simultaneously.

DYNABLA

This is made possible by Ubi Soft's joystick interface which slots into the serial port and allows two more joystick controllers to be employed. What's more, if you play alone, you must use the interface for joystick one, thus preventing piracy of the product.Of course there's a price for this hardware: five pounds, in fact. Well, that's the price to pay for piracy. I hope Ubi Soft makes the most of the interface and launches two versions of future games, one with interface and one without, allowing those people who bought Dynablaster and paid the extra to get best value for their money.There are two ways to play Dynablaster: as a solo game, with 64 levels to play through and as a multiple player game, which takes place on a single level with random elements. The solo game is not strong enough to sell the game on its own. It has got 64 levels and a password system, which allows access to the higher levels without having to play through all of the earlier ones. The idea here is to use your bombs to blow up all of the wandering monsters on the level. A bomb is dropped using the fire button and its fuse sizzles for about two seconds before detonation. When the bomb explodes, a number of things will occur. It will take out any destructible walls nearby (and the area of effect may be increased by picking up powers, revealed when these walls are destroyed). It will kill anything animated that gets caught in the explosion, including yourself if you are silly enough to be around when it goes off. Destroy all monsters and you must find the exit, which is always hidden by a wall. Blowing up a power or the exit is a bad move. Hideous monsters rush out and pounce all over you. There's more fun to be found in the multi-player, or Battle mode.You might have to work hard to find four players to join you and three extra joysticks for them to use (the fifth player gets to use the arrow keys). But it's well worth the effort for the extra playability you'll gain from the experience...Each player starts in a corner of the scre-

ASTER

en with the fifth player in the middle. Laying bombs, to both increase your available area by removal of blocking walls and to take out enemies, becomes that much more dangerous. You not only have to look out for your own bombs and avoid getting caught in the blast, but also must be aware of enemy movements and where they have placed their bombs. As blocking walls blow out, several powers appear. Depending on whether you are in normal battle mode or killer mode, these will offer extra bombs (allowing you to lay an extra bomb simultaneously for every one taken), extra lives, increased explosive area for every bomb which detonates or a number of mystery powers (in killer mode only). These include incredibly fast or painfully slow movement, automastic bomb laying (ouch!) and some extras so nasty I can't even bear to impart them. You'll find out soon enough. What's more, you can 'tag' these powers onto anyone you touch in killer mode. Gameplay is fast and very addictive once you've picked up the basics. You can never stand still, always moving to avoid an unexploded bomb. Alliances can be formed with other players to do away with a competitor and multi-player games are always more playable by definition - if you find someone to play them with, of course. Without extra players, Dynablaster won't hold your attention for very long. But get some friends and a few four packs in and you're guaranteed a great evening's bombing.

Ashley Cotter-Cairns

RATING

DYNABLASTER

RANKING ▶ 001 ◀

PRODUCER: UBI Soft
SUPPLIER: UBI Soft
GENRE: Arcade
PRICE: £ 30.99

GAME-PLAY	88%
SOUND	80%
GRAPHICS	79%
LONG-EVITY	60%
OVERALL	84%

TECHN. DATA

COMPATIBILITY

- ☑ AMIGA 500
- ☑ AMIGA 500 plus
- ☑ AMIGA 600
- ❑ requires HD

SUPPORTS:

- ❑ HARD-DISC
- ❑ 2.DRIVE
- ❑ 1 MB RAM

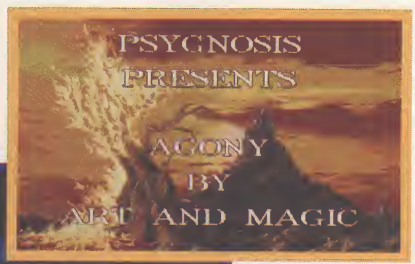
DEVICE: 4 JOYSTICKS

Agony and Ivory live together in perfect...Etc. You, strangely enough, are Alestes, one of the apprentices to some wizard chappie called Acanthropsis (the brother of Acandance and the twins Acansing and Acantalk -the only thing about me is the way that I walk).

AGONY

This wizard cove has just discovered Cosmic Power, the best sherbet in Wigan and, 'cause he's so old and old-age-pensiony, wants to pass the info onto his young whipper-snappers before he snuffs it. Well, I don't know about you but if I was on the edge of deathdom then I'd write them a quick note with all the relevant instructions. Senility appears to have overcome our wizardness because he wants to devise some jumped up tests to see which one of our trainee wizards is worthy enough. Anyway, as Alestes you turn into an owl - as you do -so that you can cover the vast distances involved. Well, anyone who has to travel the length and breath of six levels of sideways scrolling blasting has to be fit. The aim of the game, as they say on Top of the Pops, is to fly to the magical place that holds the secret of Cosmic Power - Linda Lusardi's cleavage. Arriving on three disks and with one of those manuals that look like War & Peace but with only three lines of English, Agony (coded by French outfit: Art & Magic for Psygnosis) loads with a very nice HAM Psygnosis screen along with very clear, pleasing sampled music. Then it's into the game itself. You control the owl through the six levels using the regular joystick commands. However, their is one additional command accessed via holding down the fire button. This casts your current spell. Spells are plentiful and are, basically, another method of collecting power-ups. They arrive steadily and normally turn up just as the baddies are about to increase in difficulty. Spells/power-ups include: reverse energy (useful against attacks from the rear; rotating fireball (the fireballs circle around you for all-round protection); time freeze (freezes you enemies); black magic seeker (a bit like a homing missile); plasma shield (wide protection); smart bomb (destroys all enemies on-screen); invulnerability (a limited spell) and forward power (increases firepower). There is supposed to be another feature available if you hold the fire button down for more than half a second. A spell menu is supposed to appear. After which, you scroll down the icons and select whatever you want. Now I never saw this feature, I must admit. Actually, I can't really see how it would appear, either. Basically, because I tend to play shoot'em-ups with the fire-button compressed to access a continuous stream of firepower. Now, if I'm doing that, and it's the only way to stay alive, how am I supposed to access the spell menu? Daft, innit? I mean, surely, I'm keeping my finger on the fire-button for more than half a second? A hell of a lot longer. Minutes, more like. Yet I never saw the thing once. No. All that happened was that whenever I noticed a magic potion or magical icon appear, I would head for it, collide with the thing and it would be cast immediately. Giving me instant extra weaponry. The idea that you might want to store some of these potions up for later is silly because, even with all of your spells cast, you still have a job to survive. When it comes to the crunch Agony is just a basic, but very pretty, sideways scrolling shoot'em-up. Although the graphics are nice and very Psygnosis in its style and even the way the enemy sprites move, the other aspects of the game are not too amazing. The sound is a bit of a strain. It's way over the top being unnecessarily dramatic and tending to put you on the edge of a nervous breakdown after two minutes. Also, the gameplay is fairly average. There is not a lot to do. The baddies are not exactly worthy opponents and the power-ups lack imagination. All in all there is nothing that sets Agony apart from the million and one other games of this type. Average, very, very average.

Paul Rigby



It´s a pain

RATING

Agony

RANKING

▶ 009 ◀

PRODUCER:	Psygnosis
SUPPLIER:	Psygnosis
GENRE:	Shoot´em-up
PRICE:	£ 25.99

GAME-PLAY	61%
SOUND	50%
GRAPHICS	84%
LONG-EVITY	40%
OVERALL	62%

TECHN. DATA

COMPATIBILITY

- ☑ AMIGA 500
- ☑ AMIGA 500 plus
- ☑ AMIGA 600
- ☐ requires HD

SUPPORTS:

- ☑ HARD-DISC
- ☑ 2.DRIVE
- ☑ 1 MB RAM

DEVICE: JOYSTICK

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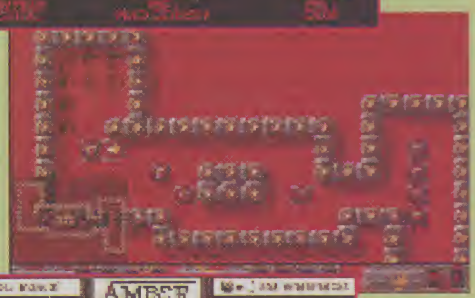

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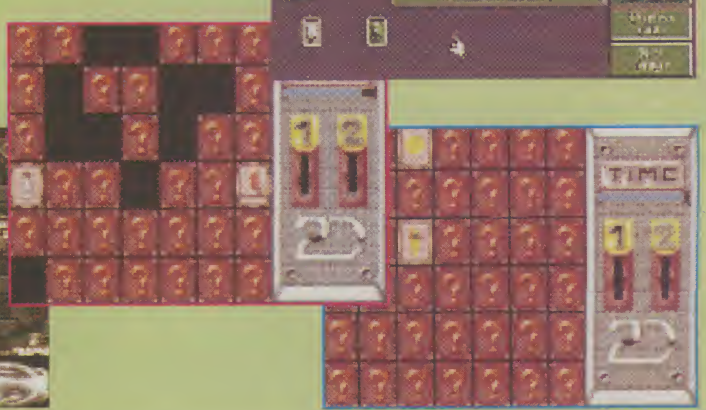


BLACK

Estoroth. Black-hearted minion of Hell or contraceptive tablet? You make up your own mind, but don't take too long, because whichever it turns out to be, you're going to have the task of banishing it to wherever it's originated from...

Having made the right choice (Estoroth himself has a printed warning - NOT TO BE TAKEN INTERNALLY), your great quest begins with tracking the Demon to his lair on this plane of existence and defeating him. Oddly enough, in common with all Demonic types, Estoroth has taken residence of a dungeon complex, populated it with fierce monsters and fiendish traps and sealed you inside. So, boys, it's do or die time. Where do you start? At a rather unobvious place. The Workbench. Because, as you'll discover to your chagrin if you don't do this first, attempting to save the party's position to any blank disk not called Gamesave will crash the program back into the Workbench and your time will have been wasted. What's more, the Gamesave disk replaces a lot of the functions of disk 1. This means that you may only save two party positions onto each blank disk - and the process takes quite a while. This is quite sloppy and it's a shame that the programmers couldn't have made life simpler. Once booted up with Black Crypt, the computer asks you to define a new party for the adventure. You're presented with a fighter, cleric, magic user and druid and may rename them at will, choose from nine faces for each and alter their statistics using the 25 extra score points to add to relevant skills. For example, the fighter's prime attribute is strength, so it's wise to bump this up to the maximum (20) using your extra points. Like Mike Tyson, a war machine on legs doesn't need to think too much, so spending points on intelligence is a waste. Essentially, there's not much to choose between Black Crypt and the one hundred and one other Dungeon Master clones. What matters are the small touches and little extras that make a game unique in its own right. Black Crypt has quite a few, although there are areas of confusion. The screen design is crucial to this sort of roleplaying game. Black Crypt preserves the traditional position

In this case you could do with one less head

The display panel: The characters, their spells and your current characters equipment

CRYPT

TECHN. DATA

COMPATIBILITY	SUPPORTS:
☑ AMIGA 500	☐ HARD-DISC
☑ AMIGA 500 plus	☑ 2.DRIVE
☑ AMIGA 600	☑ 1 MB RAM
☑ requires 1 MEG	DEVICE: MOUSE

You've got the gear now bash those monsters

for the party's view of the top left of the display. At the top right the spell and message tablet dominates. When not being used for reading texts, the tablet shows any spells currently selected and the level of spells viewed is highlighted in roman numerals underneath. Above the spell names, a highlighted icon shows whether clerical, magic-user or druidic spells are selected. To cast a spell, simply click on it. Below the spell tablet are the direction arrows, which move the party about when clicked on. At the bottom of the screen are the four player icons. A right click on the character's current details (name, armour class and level) reveals the equipment screen. Here, al and well-designed s for separate levels of clothing: the bottom level for jewellery, the next level for basic clothing and the top level for armour. Graphics throughout are colourful and superbly drawn. Monsters move well and are suitably scary, especially at night with the lights off and the sound well up. Combat is pretty standard, with a left click on the character's head operating the weapon currently in use. Any results are shown in a small 'explosion' with the amount of damage inflicted displayed in it. The game keeps the player informed by scrolling messages and information across the bottom of the playing area. This isn't new but it's a welcome extra feature. Once you've got used to the system of clicking between menus and boxes, opening pouches (an art in itself and the main cause of that confusion I mentioned earlier) and casting spells in combat, you'll have progressed far enough into the well-designed scenario to be hooked. The usual visual puzzles tax the brain while monster-bashing keeps the reflexes singing. Black Crypt is a nice 'safe' game to release. Arcade roleplaying usually goes down well and I don't see why this should not. But it is a little frustrating when saving parties that it takes so long and is so inconvenient to create a disk. Still, a nicely presented bash well worth a look.

Ashley Cotter-Cairn

The inventory: In the unlikly event you run out of food you could always go and chop-up some hapless monster

RATING

BLACK CRYPT

RANKING

▶ 004 ◀

PRODUCER: Electronic Arts
SUPPLIER: Electronic Arts
GENRE: Roleplaying
PRICE: £ 25.99

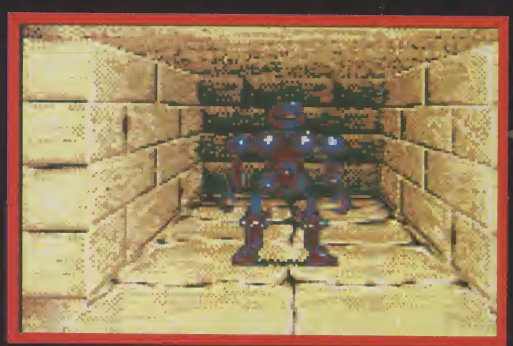
GAME-PLAY	83%
SOUND	84%
GRAPHICS	90%
LONG-EVITY	90%
OVERALL	84%

RETURN OF MEDUSA

The fiendish maze with killer robots, confusing keys, invisible doorways and dwindling torch batteries, which leads to the main game - the data protection doesn't cut in until you get to the outside world and is a game in itself.

Mentioned only in passing in the manual this game is something of an indication as to what's in store, it also provides an opportunity to turn a quick buck, which may come in useful at a later stage. Once out of the dungeon, Prince Cirion has the whole planet of Morenor to roam across, in search of the thirteen keys to Medusa's secret dungeon where she guards the dark crystal Dohor, from which she draws her power. The keys are hidden in secret bunkers guarded by hostile gangs so it is necessary to raise an army. Armies need to be paid, so to raise an army, it is necessary to earn money. You can earn money a number of different ways, which are mentioned in the manual, among them are - attacking enemy gangs , playing roulette, the stock market, and discovering treasure. All worthy occupations for a prince on his uppers. To attack enemy gangs you need an army - a small one admittedly, but a palpable force of fighting men nonetheless, these can be found hanging around in the local park, where players can rent from a number of different races and professions. Parks occur in towns and cities along with banks, casinos, docks, garages, department stores and other useful amenities. Any attack on an enemy gang is liable to end badly, with heavy losses of troops, weapons and goods. Roulette is obviously available in the casinos, huge amounts can be gained - and lost - in these places, a good way to make money where it isn't essential, but it would be unwise to risk your all on what is at best a 50-50 gamble. The stock market - a far more respectable form of gambling - is a method of gaining wealth, but it helps if you're very well off in the first place. The bank will lend a certain amount of money, but not a lot - to make money on the stock market requires patience, knowledge - which is expensive, and time - which is likely to be in short supply. Treasure hunting is instantly lucrative, as long as it is successful, and you can afford to dig up what you find, mines and whatnot cost a fortune. So, life is not a bowl of cherries on the planet Morenor, this is apparently because Medusa is in charge (dunno really - try winning at roulette, or opening a mine on the cheap in Europe in 1992). The dangers inherent in all of this fast living become increasingly apparent as you traipse around the planet trying to make an honest bob, wandering brigands can knacker armed forces and confiscate any wealth, dodgy bets in the casino can lose all your money, and failure to invest wisely on the stock market can result in money failing to increase in value - armies need paying - when you're broke you're dead. All remarkable in similarity to Earth in the 20th century, without the maze full of killer robots and the odd signpost pointing to cities reduced to rubble in ancient wars - some of which are in German for some reason - one could be forgiven for thinking that this was a simulation of modern life in a British University. The whole thing gets further away from reality as you get richer. Transport is by gliders or ships, if you want to take your army along, (probably a good idea) you have to buy warships to carry them. To find the secret bunkers you need to buy a frequency quartz in one of the towns. One of those games; quite entertaining, but difficult to get going, once you're in and making money things start to warm up, but it's all a bit slow up until then. Sound and graphics are okay, the whole thing needs to be saved when you get past a certain point to prevent endless repetition of early stages.

Huw Pryce



A metallic dude is not exactly the kind of foe you'ld expect in a dungeon

RATING

Return of Medusa

RANKING ▶ 008 ◀

PRODUCER: Starbyte
SUPPLIER: Starbyte
GENRE: Roleplaying
PRICE: £ 25.99

GAME-PLAY	68%
SOUND	74%
GRAPHICS	70%
LONG-EVITY	69%
OVERALL	75%

TECHN. DATA

COMPATIBILITY

- ☑ AMIGA 500
- ☑ AMIGA 500 plus
- ☑ AMIGA 600
- ☐ requires HD

SUPPORTS:

- ☐ HARD-DISC
- ☑ 2.DRIVE
- ☑ 1 MB RAM

DEVICE: Mouse/Keyboard

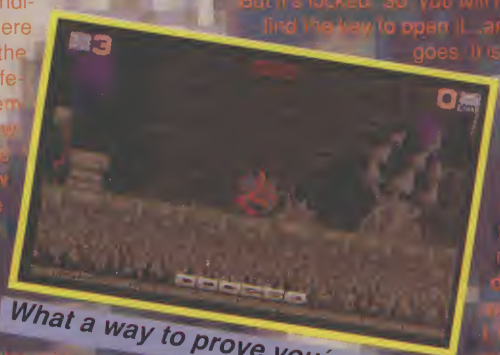
In Ork, you play the part of Ku-Kubal. You are a Heyadahl, peaceful chaps one and all, unless set upon whereupon they kick bottom. As they have been picked on recently the Heyadahl decided to defend themselves with all kinds of Rambo-esque weapons.

They, themselves, are no mean fighters. One of the best jobs in the land is to command a cruiser. However, promising captains have to undergo a test to make sure that they are cool and can hang out with the best of them. Thus you are zipped down onto a planet called Ixion for a test over many levels. Cue one, Shadow-of-the-Beast-type platform game from Psygnosis. That's about it, really. Ork is Shadow of the Beast by any other name, but not as well executed. You control your, rather odd looking, chappie around the planet, scrolling left and right. The basic walking mode for Ku-Kubal follows the usual joystick left/right movements. Hitting the diagonals forces your guy to jump in those directions, while pushing the joystick up just makes him jump upwards. Pushing the joystick downwards enters the computer. Now, the computer is where the majority of your information is accessed. the silly thing is, though, that you are still liable to attack while you are checking out the computer. You can check out the Object Analysis. Basically you don't know what an object is then quiz the computer. The Scanner Module, once activated, presents you with a map of your immediate surroundings. You will also see an indication of where you are on the map. The Life-force system tells you how well you are and how much of the game you have completed. The Systems Control enables you to save your game or load a previously saved game from disk. Death means no life force. But if you do die then you will have three chances to pick up where you left off via the continue option. Weapons are few, the laser cannon in fact. You do, however, get the chance to use a jet pack to whisk you around the screen. Gameplay, apart from killing everything that moves, consists of simple puzzles. For example, on level one you have to get the giant to open a gate to the next level. However, he won't budge unless he has some gold in his corner. So you have to find the treasure chest. But it's locked. So you will need to find the key to open it... and on it goes. It is a stream of that your character cannot crouch downwards. There were a number of occasions where jumping was useless and I was just caught with my space jockey shorts down. "Well," you might say, "why didn't you shoot the buggers?" Ah, well now comes the other problem. You see if you press the fire button that will trigger you fire-power. However, depending on what the program itself is doing the game will not always recognise that you are, in fact, shooting. That is, you sometimes have to wait until the game has finished off moving some monster's head around for a bit before it will remember to bring in the gun sound effects and the destruction that goes with it. This can be a pain or death for your character. Especially where you find you cannot jump to avoid a bodile so the only way is to shoot it. Unfortunately, just at that moment, the game decides to totally ignore you gun shots and make a cup of tea instead. Aaaarrgghh! Another obstacle is found when jumping on platforms. There is a very real difference between the graphic of any one particular platform and the physical area of the platform that you have to safely jump on. Normally, the 'safe' area of the platform that will actually support you is smaller than the graphic itself. So, you will, at times, find yourself actually falling through parts of some graphics when you thought you had jumped onto it. Again... Aaarrggghh! So there we have it. Nice graphics, average sound but poor implementation leading to frustrating gameplay.

Paul Rigby

Not the sort of guy you drink with

The mothership from Hell



What a way to prove you're a man

RATING

Ork

RANKING

▶ 008 ◀

PRODUCER: Psygnosis
SUPPLIER: Psygnosis
GENRE: Platform 'n' Ladders
PRICE: £ 25.99

GAME-PLAY	54%
SOUND	70%
GRAPHICS	74%
LONG-EVITY	30%
OVERALL	54%

TECHN. DATA

COMPATIBILITY	SUPPORTS:
☑ AMIGA 500	❑ HARD-DISC
☑ AMIGA 500 plus	☑ 2.DRIVE
☑ AMIGA 600	☑ 1 MB RAM
❑ requires HD	DEVICE: JOYSTICK

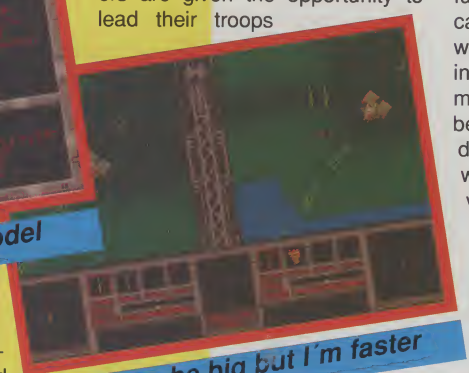
STEEL EMPIRE

Have cyborg, will conquer. Steel Empire has a little something for everyone; risk freaks, robot fans, logistical number-crunchers, you name it.

Up to five players slog it out with a large range of cyborgs over an entire continent of 72 countries, setting up supply lines, factories, fortresses and lines of strategic defence, with an option to view and fight each battle personally. The intro' sequence gives a rundown of the various cyborgs and their particular weapons systems and terrain compatibility, it is worth making a note of these, though they can be accessed from the factory screen. Once past the data protection, players are confronted with three options; full game, strategic game, and battle practice. The practice game offers two scenarios for test piloting a cyborg, one scenario shows a cyborg's abilities on its own, the other shows how to run a group of cyborgs. The strategic game option owes a great deal to games like Risk; up to five can play, the computer can play in any unoccupied positions, or they can be toggled off, plus the competence levels can be set for the computer to stop it winning all the time, which is just as well really. Each player is allocated a country and a sum of money and must build a factory to produce cyborgs, with cyborgs built, the next round can be used to occupy neighbouring countries. The more countries occupied during the initial stage of the game the greater the income and the more factories, forts, and cyborgs possible. Of course it is possible to spread forces too thinly, risking severance of supply lines and loss of valuable facilities when the fur starts to fly. Fighting starts when one empire moves its forces into a country occupied by the forces of another country (understandably enough). At the end of each game round, blast doors slide across the screen, obscuring the map, the computer informs everyone that everyone else is plotting their destruction while muffled battle noises come from behind the doors. When the screens slide back, everyone finds out who won what, whether their invasion plans worked, and who has invaded whom. A sampled female voice says "well done" if anyone has pulled off a particularly brilliant coup, she laughs unpleasantly if anyone has been severely beaten. In really dire circumstances she announces that "the situation is critical", and when someone loses she says "you have been crushed" - charmed I'm sure. Frankly she gets to be a bit of a pain in the wossname; every time the message changes the computer has to fumble around with the disc, slowing everything down noticeably. The full game combines the practice and strategic options; when the doors slide across players are given the opportunity to lead their troops into battle, time spent on the practice stage shows its true worth, the displays are (as usual) confusing to the uninitiated. Invading generals can target capitals, fortifications, cyborg forces and factories, while defenders can marshal their own forces in what they hope will be the most effective formations. In battle, generals can switch from one cyborg to the next or stay with one in particular, displays show state of ammunition, temperature (they'll stop moving until they cool down enough) and armour condition. Players who do not wish to fight can leave it up to the 'sim' option, but won't be able to view the battle, the outcome of which will be decided by the computer. A huge game, which can take several hours to play out; the game takes ages to load (a hard drive might be a good idea), and is filled with long pauses as it consults disc drives between moves. The easily confused should read the manual very carefully, but once mastered the whole thing is immensely satisfying. The areas where improvements could be made are in the between game moves; the blast doors are irritating, the game would lose nothing by providing a view of movements as they take place. Computer competence should be split between strategic and combat, allowing those of us with poor motor skills and good strategy to set high IQ for overall planning and a more realistic (or perhaps slower) combat level. Compelling and involving.

Huw Pryce

The big 'n' beefy model



He may be big but I'm faster

Your army awaits

RATING

Steel Empire

RANKING ▶ 002 ◀

PRODUCER:	Millenium
SUPPLIER:	Electronic Arts
GENRE:	Strategy
PRICE:	£29.99

GAME-PLAY	92%
SOUND	75%
GRAPHICS	71%
LONG-EVITY	70%
OVERALL	89%

TECHN. DATA

COMPATIBILITY
- ☑ AMIGA 500
- ☑ AMIGA 500 plus
- ☑ AMIGA 600
- ☑ requires 1 Meg

SUPPORTS:
- ☑ HARD-DISC
- ☑ 2.DRIVE
- ☑ 1 MB RAM

DEVICE: Mouse

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The MANAGER

Booting the bladder or just thinking about it? That old summer footballing hiatus strikes again. Eager summer footballers can pack up the blow- football games and Subuteo, for now you can have three divisions of football teams to choose from, various levels of skill, F.A. Cup, European Cup, three different games, and all without having to raise a sweat! The Manager has arrived.

Good press, this won't last for long

The manager is, if the cover artwork is anything to go by, something of a dodgy geezer, (would you buy a used car off this man?). Prejudice aside, there are four managers on the actual discs none of whom look this naff. The presence of four managers indicates that four people can play, each player can manage the team of his or her choice - as long as it isn't Barnet - fourth division teams are available on request from the manufacturers, who also state that they will not be providing personalized discs with digitized photos of specific people (pity), so if you don't want to be the ugly, fat, bald one on the end and all the others are used up, tough! This game, as I'm sure David Coleman must have said at one time or another, is a game of more than two halves! Each of the three game varieties offer a different slant on the world of league football management; the one season game starts off in the First Division with a strong team - the idea is to win the championship. The three season game starts, once again, in the First Division, but with a weaker team - the idea is to stay in the First Division by training and maintaining the team over three seasons. In both options each team gets a crack at the UEFA cup as well as the others. At the end of both 'short' games, player's performance is judged on various criteria, and high scores are assigned. The third option offers a start in the Third Division and no time limit; the game will continue until you're fed up or go out of business. In each game the managers must maintain the fitness of teams, stadiums and bank balances. To these ends, managers must compete for sponsorship (in the longer games), buy and sell players, borrow and lend money from banks and fellow managers, organize training schedules, send teams to training camps, and of course, choose tactics. The whole thing is immensely detailed; left footers should play on the left of the field, right footers on the right, teams perform better at home than away, it is even possible to choose from three automatic formations, or to make up your own. When training it is important not to let the team get too fit before they gain in skill or they'll injure themselves, training too hard will lead to exhaustion. If the team performs badly gates will fall, sponsorship will not be forthcoming, income will fall and managers will have less to work with. The computer keeps and eye on proceedings and chips in with helpful information from time to time; it'll tell you when you can't be relegated for instance, also when you can't avoid being relegated, and when a promotion is as good as in the bag, or unattainable. These messages can help you to know if it's worth running your team ragged at the end of a season to get that last few percent, or if you can just let them relax and recuperate - fitness at the end of a season will have an effect on the team at the beginning of the next. It is important to have enough money at the end of the season to be able to pay players' salaries over the summer, be warned. Other end of season considerations include the state of players' contracts which must be renewed - or not, depending on how long they have to run. An impressive effort from the Software 2000 team, in the vernacular - the boys did well. Graphics are OK, the actual match screen is great fun and gives an authentic Saturday afternoon feel to the whole thing, right down to the crowd samples. The whole package is very slick and well produced, aimed at real footballing aficionados and not for the fainthearted.

Huw Pryce

Is he crap or do you just need the money

RATING

The Manager

RANKING ▶ 004 ◀

PRODUCER: Software 2000
SUPPLIER: U.S. Gold
GENRE: Strategy
PRICE: £ 25.99

GAME-PLAY	81%
SOUND	77%
GRAPHICS	84%
LONG-EVITY	72%
OVERALL	83%

TECHN. DATA

COMPATIBILITY
- ☑ AMIGA 500
- ☑ AMIGA 500 plus
- ☑ AMIGA 600
- ☑ requires 1 Meg

SUPPORTS:
- ☑ HARD-DISC
- ☑ 2.DRIVE
- ☑ 1 MB RAM

DEVICE: Mouse

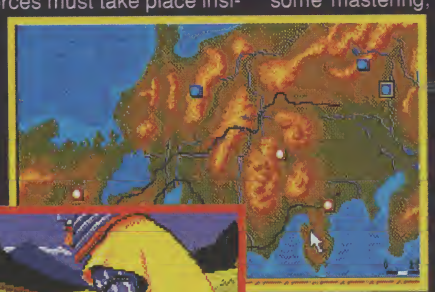
SAMURAI

THE WAY OF THE WARRIOR

Like any other 16th century Japanese nobleman, or Daimyo as they called themselves, Usaka San has a chip on his shoulder. He is particularly annoyed with the evil and greedy Obinaka who killed Usaka San's father and stole his land.

Samurai gives you the opportunity to represent Usaka San (or Obinaka for that matter) in the period of Japanese history known as the Sengoku period, meaning "a country at war with itself". Of course if it meant "everybody coexisted in sublime harmony during this period" no-one would buy the game would they? Anyway, for you this campaign is a matter of honour and all that guff. The game is played on a series of maps - an overall control map, which is of Japan's main island - Honshu, and battlefield maps which show any area where an engagement is taking place. At the beginning, the map shows the two sides which are identified as grey circles or Edo (Japanese that...) and blue diamonds or Daiyamondo (Hmmm...), this gets a bit confusing when the army icons start moving around, so it's best to simply remember which colour is which. The player default setting leaves the player occupying the top of the map, but it is possible to toggle between sides. Each side starts with five cities or towns, each of which is allocated a certain number of Koku (dosh to you John) with which players purchase an army. Armies are composed of Samurai, Mounted Samurai, Arquebusier (gunmen), bowmen and spearmen, each type has its own value, both in koku and in battle. Men purchased go into the city defence army of each city, it is possible to raise a mobile army from the city defence army of each city. It is important to balance offence with defence; cities must be defended as they provide annual revenue to pay for more men. Armies move at one square per game move, all transfers of troops from city to mobile forces must take place inside the city, movement is effected through a movement icon at the bottom of the screen, during the movement phase of each game turn. Pressing 2 allows the player to switch between computer vs human and computer vs computer modes, the latter of which allows players to sit back and watch as things develop. When two armies meet, or one army reaches an opposing city there's likely to be a fight, this is where things get interesting, the Japanese used myriad, complex formations for fighting battles, the battlefield map is displayed and the player may choose from a number of formations made up of smaller formations of mobile units of men. This phase is complicated but worth pursuing, it's what the game is all about. The battlefield map allows a fair degree of control of proceedings throughout the battle using the medium of the Main Command Screen Panel, it takes some mastering, but once mastered gives statistical breakdowns of casualties during the battle, allows transfers of men from one unit to another, assign formations to groups, and to click from one part of the battlefield to another. Compared to the battlefield the rest of the campaign is fairly hum-drum and ordinary, cities must be defended other cities must be conquered, when all cities are in the possession of one side or the other the game is pretty much over. In the meantime troops must be manoeuvred to their best advantage and replenished as they get rubbed out by the opposition. In spite of the extreme flexibility of the fighting system, this game lacks a certain something, graphics are of a reasonably high standard, the sound is enjoyably realistic, but given the weight of the manual and the huge attention to details of Japanese history within, the only real indication that the game is set in 16th century Japan is in the battle formations and graphic style. That most of the manual seems to suggest that a fairly in-depth knowledge of 16th century Japanese power politics would be a useful asset in the playing of the game is frankly laughable - like including charts and a run down of the World War Two battle for the Western Approaches in a game of Battleships!

Huw Pryce



RATING

Samurai

RANKING ▶ 010 ◀

PRODUCER: Impressions
SUPPLIER: Impressions
GENRE: Strategy
PRICE: £29.99

GAME-PLAY	64%
SOUND	77%
GRAPHICS	75%
LONG-EVITY	52%
OVERALL	67%

TECHN. DATA

COMPATIBILITY

- ☑ AMIGA 500
- ☑ AMIGA 500 plus
- ☑ AMIGA 600
- ☑ requires 1 Meg

SUPPORTS:

- ☐ HARD-DISC
- ☑ 2.DRIVE
- ☑ 1 MB RAM

DEVICE: Mouse

HOI

She's cute, but is she worth travelling the Madlands for? Welcome to the Planet of the Saurs, a planet populated by green creatures called Saurs (coincidence?).

Saurs live in peace with one another, helping each other and taking pleasure from the satisfaction of another's gratitude (gag!). Smug bunch aren't they? There is however a price to pay for this neo-liberal utopia; all young female Saurs live on one side of the planet, and all young male Saurs live on the other - something to do with an ancient decree of the elders, those rotten old elders eh? teenage years, Hoi our young Saur suddenly feels 'the urge' and is blithely packed off by his hugely irresponsible parents into the Madlands (a sort of cross between Birmingham and Beirut after a dose of something that disagrees with you). That games designers could bung something as, well, cute, as Hoi into an environment as hostile as this, is a testimony to the sad, twisted, unreal lives that most of them lead. Hoi is so Cute that it would be best for diabetics to check their blood sugar levels before playing - just in case. He lives in a shoe (where but?) near the foot of a couple of trees that lead into the Madlands. Saurs start out with nine lives, they need them! It is possible to gain an extra three lives per level by collecting certain tokens, which are often kept in utterly lethal locations (spiky, inaccessible areas with long drops either side for example), the particular extra life objects you need to collect are shown in the bottom right of the screen. Various other objects in the game provide bonus points - but most objects are liable to kill. Death stalks the Madlands in forms too numerous to catalogue, although vast, bottom waggling bees, poisonous, semi-intelligent snakes (not hugely clever, but bright enough), crazed-grinning-exploding-things and vicious flying bombs, would come fairly high on the list. There are also traps, blindends, machines and pitfalls to be negotiated across four levels of increasing difficulty. When all lives are lost Hoi can return to the level he was at, at a cost of lives per-level, be warned! At various points in a level there are reincarnation jewels, these are fairly obvious as Hoi turns red briefly when passing over one, after losing a life Hoi will be reincarnated at the last jewel he passed. It is important that you actually touch these jewels, failure to do so will mean having to fight your way back through the previous section which can be rather annoying - it is important to keep a cool head and not to hurry (except in the underwater section where it is of paramount importance that you hurry - or you'll drown!). Graphically the game is well presented, just like an arcade game; well animated, good colours, the lot. The soundtrack has to be one of the least loathsome this year, particularly the intro' which has everything from guitar to drum solos. The game itself isn't all that original; climbing trees, negotiating traps and obstacles, avoiding bizarre, grinning monsters, nothing new, but put together in a new way, and in a hitherto untried combination. Commercially this game has everything going for it. A great deal of work has gone into every aspect, and it shows. Hoi deserves to be a best seller and to have many sequels. Far less repellent than Mario and with no less stupid a name, Hoi deserves to run and run - and he'll have to if he's going to meet the Sauress of his dreams, fantasies, desired objects, visual fallacies, insubstantial things... Thesaurus - the Sauress, geddit? Oh don't bother...

Huw Pryce

He´s green, cute and has a spring in his step

It goes without saying that the two halves of the planet are separated by a region called The Madlands, a wild, weird, wicked, wacky, wobbly and above all woefully-terminal-to-the-unwary place to be. In order to, ehrm! meet a member of the opposite sex, a young Saur is obliged to cross said Madlands - what a victorian anthropologist called Fraser would have called a 'rite of passage'. Such things exist on Earth in the form of Weddings, Bar-mitzvah, sixteenth birthday and other such traumatic events. At some arbitrary point during those difficult

RATING

Hoi

RANKING ▶ 002 ◀

PRODUCER: Hollyware Entertainment
SUPPLIER: The Software Business
GENRE: Platforms 'n' Ladders
PRICE: £25.99

GAME-PLAY	87%
SOUND	86%
GRAPHICS	82%
LONG-EVITY	74%
OVERALL	87%

TECHN. DATA

COMPATIBILITY

- ☑ AMIGA 500
- ☑ AMIGA 500 plus
- ☑ AMIGA 600
- ☐ requires HD

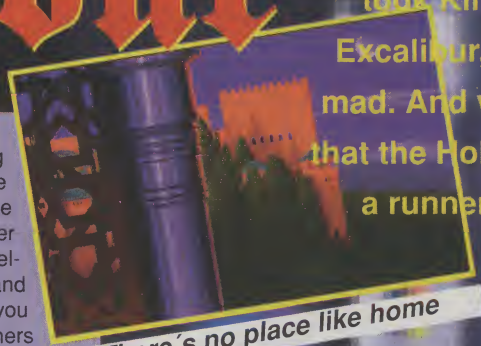
SUPPORTS:

- ☐ HARD-DISC
- ☑ 2.DRIVE
- ☑ 1 MB RAM

DEVICE: JOYSTICK

Vengeance of Excalibur

Nineve. Fair maiden, perhaps the fairest of the land and dear indeed to the knights of the round table. When she was kidnapped by the evil Sir Breuse, the people were upset. When it was realised that the kidnappers took King Arthur's shield and Excalibur, his sword, they were mad. And when they discovered that the Holy Grail had also done a runner, they positively peed wine.



There´s no place like home

Yes, it's the Holy Grail rearing its ugly head yet again. Will that most noble and desirable of chalices ever lie down? Chances are that, while the ignoble forces of evil have anything to do with it, it's going to be on the move as much as a homeless person with wanderlust.

Your job, as the four knights of the round table (you may choose them at the start of play), is to recover the Holy Grail, Excalibur and the other relics stolen by Breuse. Oh, if you come across Nineve and are feeling well-disposed towards maidens, you might bring her back as well. Just a minor point, though. Don't get too obsessed by the fairer sex.

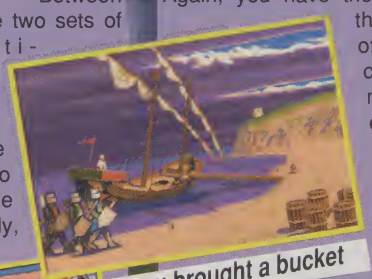
That must have been a good curry

The game comes on four disks. It's a map-based strategy wargame. You begin with a meagre force and limited resources to recruit more. Using cunning and by gleaning clues and information from the many sources made available to you, you have to track down and defeat Breuse and his army, locate the maiden and the treasure and return, victorious or not at all.

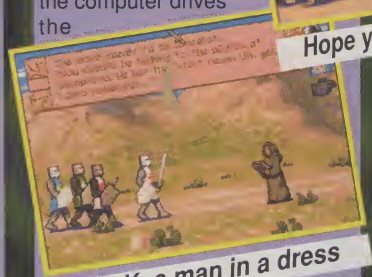
Using the various icons, you can get the most from your band of knights. They may be commanded by clicking on the war icon. This changes the pointer - a sword in normal mode - to an arrow which then may be clicked on a force. The contents of that force are then listed in a separate box of text. It's up to you then to either click on the leader to leave to force intact, or select another member and command him individually.

Selecting a location then sends the party off in the direction you chose. They will travel on roads whenever possible to save time, only leaving the beaten track where necessary. En route the party may encounter several types of travellers. Some are neutral and will leave you alone if you don't bother them. Others are friendly and will hail you, offering help or asking for aid. The third, predictably, are unfriendly and will engage your band in combat.

This section of the game is good fun. Your forces are listed in the top left of the screen and the enemy numbers at the top right. Between these two sets of statistics a number of commands are listed. These may be clicked on to alter the course of the battle. Alternatively, the computer drives the battle for you.



Hope you brought a bucket



EeeK, a man in a dress

The other way to play is to let the outcome of the battle be decided without the computer bothering you with the details. This doesn't allow you to withdraw though so it's a risky shortcut.

In various places the map is not detailed enough and you may need to examine a location. This happens automatically when needed, but if you want to examine a place away from your party the magnifying glass is used. This lets you zoom into the map and look at a town or other location, find out about inhabitants, enemy forces and travellers. Some areas, like the underground tunnels in the mountains, are made up entirely of zoomed-in screens. It's in these detailed areas that one-to-one combat occurs. Again, you have the choice of three modes of computer control - normal, cautious and reckless - or manual control of the knight in combat. If a knight wins his combat he will sometimes earn extra combat points. Should he pick a fight with innocents, though, he may lose nobility points. Trading and the use of items also takes place in zoomed areas.Vengeance of Excalibur is a game which will appeal to staunch strategists and roleplaying fans alike. It's nicely presented, with colourful, varied and imaginative graphics and sharp, though repetitive, sound. It is heavy going at first but soon becomes compulsive. The temptation to hunt down Breuse right away and slaughter him is a strong one but there's hours of careful planning and preparation between you and your foe. A winning formula.

Ashley Cotter-Cairns

RATING

EXCALIBUR

RANKING
▶ 005 ◀

PRODUCER: Virgin Games
SUPPLIER: Virgin Games
GENRE: Strategy
PRICE: £ 30.99

GAME-PLAY	84%
SOUND	75%
GRAPHICS	83%
LONG-EVITY	70%
OVERALL	82%

TECHN. DATA

COMPATIBILITY
- ☑ AMIGA 500
- ☑ AMIGA 500 plus
- ☑ AMIGA 600
- ☑ requires 1 MEG

SUPPORTS:
- ❑ HARD-DISC
- ☑ 2.DRIVE
- ☑ 1 MB RAM

DEVICE: MOUSE

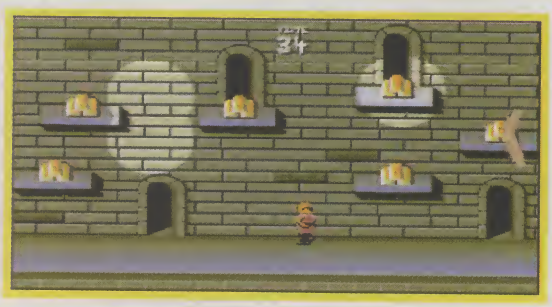
SO WHO THE HECK ARE THE Bonanza Bros.?

Well, Robo and Mobo are, we are told, a couple of reformed thieves who have been commissioned to steal a number of items from the various properties of an anonymous benefactor who wishes to test his security arrangements.

Clearly the American manufacturers feel that they have to come up with some spurious excuse for putting the game buying public on the side of the thieves for a change, ho hum!Morals aside this game has very little to say for itself. The basic idea is quite fun but once the various character types; guards, caretakers, dogs and bomb flinging heavies, have been introduced, fought, sneaked past and stunned the game doesn't change very much from level to level. The nasties do however get more persistent in their pursuit of our two heroes as you get into the game, but that does little to relieve the basic lack of imagination of the whole situation.Robo and Mobo behave like a couple of clumsy meatheads, bumbling through the various security arrangements, attempting to sneak past sleeping guards and dogs, shooting anything that moves with stun guns (no violence here...) and occasionally walloping people unconscious with doors (...well perhaps a little). Each level is more complicated than the last, with a few more rooms, more aggressive guards and more elaborate ways in and out of the building. On some levels there is a 'fast track' way out (you have three minutes per level), level two for instance, has an aerial runway from one side of the screen to the other, if you plan your route carefully, you won't need it, but it will get you to the exit a good minute quicker than the stairs. Access to the mining level is via a mining railway on which nothing happens.The game is easily picked up, and difficult to master; essential qualities for a knockabout, boot up and play game, most of the skill is in the joystick control, though a little thought is needed in choosing the route through each level. You can also use the options screen to add a few lives on at the beginning of play, not to mention the credits each character has to give them at least a fighting chance.Graphically Bonanza Bros. is colourful and easy to follow, nothing spectacular, but sufficient to the task in hand. The sound is the best feature, the tune doesn't grate too much and the sound effects are very good. The humour of the original idea is obvious all the time, characters make funny noises as they perform their various tasks, if you're caught in the searchlights during the bonus stage, a bunch of policemen rush on and clobber you with truncheons. When surprised, the catering staff throw their plates all over the place (stand clear), sleeping guard dogs prove the old saying when woken and when guards realise you are in the room a big exclamation mark appears above their heads. All very amusing, but too thin on the ground and too repetitive.What the game needs is a little more Oomph! the characterisation is good, children will be able to draw them easily, driving schoolteachers, parents and older siblings insane with irritation, there isn't the vaguely uneasy racial stereotype of a funny Italian American with a big moustache anywhere in sight, perhaps the whole thing is too safe. Like the endless shoot 'em-ups and AD&D based role playing games, Bonanza Bros. is based firmly on a tried and tested formula and will be sold using established marketing techniques to a bunch of people who already have two or three similar games and who may; contrary to the marketing people's ideas about them, have the imagination to be a little disappointed. If it was the first game of it's kind it would be quite good, but it isn'tBonanza Bros. is not an awful game (I may have been a little hard on it), but not wildly exciting either, good for the kids, but unlikely to appeal to many teenagers. If U.S. Gold has hopes of a Super Mario Brothers type cult status for these two, they'll have to come up with a better vehicle for them than this.

Huw Pryce

Splat, who needs a gun when a well placed door will do the deed



Dodge those searchlights and grab that gold

TECHN. DATA

COMPATIBILITY

- ☑ AMIGA 500
- ☑ AMIGA 500 plus
- ☑ AMIGA 600
- ☐ requires HD

SUPPORTS:

- ☐ HARD-DISC
- ☑ 2.DRIVE
- ☑ 1 MB RAM

DEVICE: JOYSTICK

RATING

Bonanza Bros.

RANKING ▶ 008 ◀

PRODUCER: U.S. Gold
SUPPLIER: U.S. Gold
GENRE: Arcade
PRICE: £ 25.99

GAME-PLAY	70%
SOUND	79%
GRAPHICS	80%
LONG-EVITY	50%
OVERALL	73%

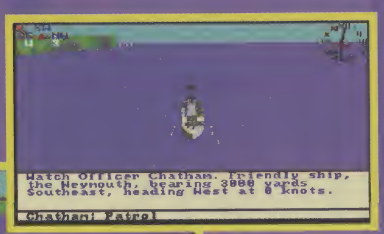
DREADNOUGHTS

Dreadnoughts is a game on a theme which has been used many times before. You have to captain a warship on several Allied sea missions, following orders to escort ships, seek and destroy, perform scouting missions and so on.

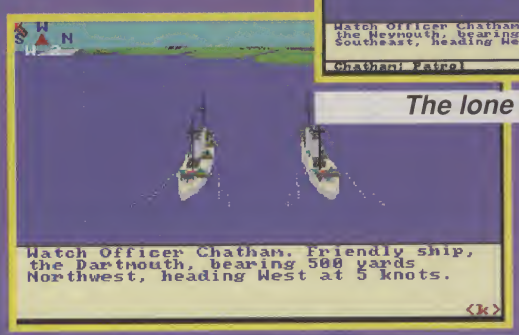
What is different about Dreadnoughts is the quality of the presentation - it's simply superb in every way - and the method of command, which is as near to revolutionary as you'll ever want to see. It's also a deadly serious game. Now, there's nothing wrong with deadly serious games, in fact I think that wargames based on historical events, where tact is diplomatic, need to retain a little dignity. I do, however, object to being vetted on every single action I choose to make. I can't see what's so wrong about deciding to ram and fire upon the other ships in my fleet, but the crew won't do it. Ah well, back to being Captain Birdseye. The display, which defaults to the Captain's gaze from the bridge, takes up about two thirds of the screen and is drawn in superb 3D. This really is a state of the art display for a game mainly concerning itself with strategy. You may also alter the angle to look at other ships, using a command LOOK AT SHIP or the telescope. The latter may also be used to spy out land and the view is just as dramatic and impressive as the one from the bridge. Did I mention a command back there? Yes. The other third of the screen is taken up by a text box, where you issue orders and see the results of your actions appearing. This box also serves as a report area, where messages received and briefs from the battle appear. All commands are entered by typing them in and mainly follow the DO THIS TO THAT format. For instance, typing HELM and then ENGINES FULL AHEAD will give you control of the rudder and the ship's power. I've seen very limited parser input on some strategy games, but nothing like this! That's not to say that I like it or approve of it. In fact, there are many better ways of getting around the problem of commands in my opinion. I would have liked a menu with choices which led to submenus. Why go to all that bother? Because the parser interpretation is extremely, no, bloody annoying. Type in anything even slightly wrong and you're given some smart alec comment like "I don't understand that, captain" or "This makes no sense, Captain". Admittedly, the cursor does make an attempt to show you where you've gone wrong, but the game has stuck exclusively to the original names for everything and everywhere. As I said before, this is tactful, but not very user-friendly. Why suitable abbreviations weren't incorporated I don't know. Those long foreign names are easily mistyped and frustration doesn't so much creep in as charge. Then there's that point about disobeying orders. When I was in the Navy (joke), if you didn't obey an order you were court-martialled, but whenever I tried something a little contrary to the Allied interest I got treated like I was mad (which I was trying to be). Historical accuracy is one thing, but censorship of gameplay is quite another. What if I was a Nazi that had wormed his way up the ranks and wanted to sabotage the mission? Why can't I do that? I don't suppose for a minute that the sort of players that will be attracted to Dreadnoughts would want to spend half their lives blowing their own comrades to bits, but I wanted to give it a shot. Rules are made to be broken, but playing this game is like going through your entire childhood with your mother behind you, making sure you don't do anything you shouldn't be doing. Strategy buffs and fans of historical wargames will crow for hours over the graphics and will, no doubt, manage to get over the communication difficulties. Alas, not everyone will have the patience to persevere. I didn't, but I was very impressed with the attempt and there's obviously years of work layered into this project. Perhaps Dr. Turcan could adapt his idea to fit around a more exciting front end, making the game more accessible for the masses. Until then, only approach if you possess saintly patience.

Ashley Cotter-Cairns

The big boys go a hunting



The lone patrol



Better still take a friend

RATING

Dreadnoughts

RANKING ▶ 007 ◀

PRODUCER: Turcan Research
SUPPLIER: Turcan Research
GENRE: Strategy
PRICE: £34.99

GAME-PLAY	73%
SOUND	N/A
GRAPHICS	92%
LONG-EVITY	73%
OVERALL	75%

TECHN. DATA

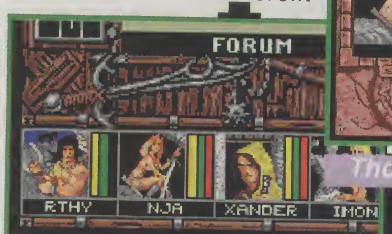
COMPATIBILITY	SUPPORTS:
☑ AMIGA 500	☐ HARD-DISC
☐ AMIGA 500 plus	☑ 2.DRIVE
☐ AMIGA 600	☑ 1 MB RAM
☐ requires HD	DEVICE: Mouse

SPIRIT OF ADVENTURE

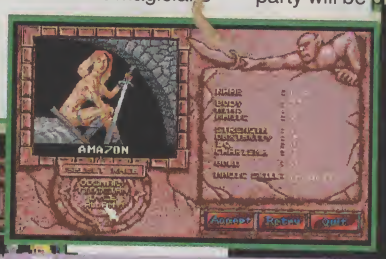
Our heroes find themselves in Moon City, in search of, well, adventure I suppose. Before they depart for the great unknown they must do the usual heroic mooching around bars, getting into fights and consorting with druggies, con-artists and assorted denizens of the night.

In short, the kind of behaviour that is liable to get people into trouble. The party has been asked by a group of worthies, known collectively as The Cult of the Knowing, to rid the world - Lamarge - of the colossally addictive, and rather dangerous drug, Opitar. Not to mention the organization dedicated to trading in the stuff - The Fraternity of Dreamers. The whole game is hugely elaborate, occupying three discs, the first of which is taken up with an engagingly misspelt animated sequence on the subject of Opitar and it's effects. Once through the copy protection - be advised that headlines count as lines where Starbyte is concerned - it is necessary to generate a few player characters. The character generating system is a real must for lovers of the intricacies of AD&D, providing details of strength, dexterity, intelligence and charisma, as well as psionic and magical abilities which are important for mental combat and casting Rune spells. Of the various character classes available, each has a corresponding opposite sex, the only difference is that female player characters wear fewer clothes. Stats are awarded randomly after race and class have been chosen. Race (there are four to choose from) is an important factor in the choice of class; Odinary make the strongest warriors and the worst magicians, Allanies on the other hand make rather poor warriors and excellent magicians - experimentation with different mixes of race and class can prove profitable. Everyone on Lamarge is born with an inherited magical ability, many of which are extremely useful. Once equipped these skills can be used in combat by clicking on the icon in the character's window (you should have six characters by the time you leave the monastery in Moon City). If the various characteristics do not fit the bill, simply hit retry and start again. The character generation system is a little cumbersome to use, but very flexible in the range of attributes it provides. Once in the city the party must raise funds, have fights and raise more funds, much of which will go on healing. It's important to find a healer and get provisions together, also to charge up the crystal map, without which the party will be prevented from leaving the city. There are more monsters in Moon City than bed bugs in a cheap hotel, so no party will have to wait very long before something happens. Street names such as Screamer Slice, Skid Row and The Road to Madness, give some idea of how nasty it can get, Hyde Park Corner, and Regent Street on the other hand, have a sort of wacky incongruity. The Magic system looks far more complicated on paper than it actually is (which is just as well) but easily intricate enough to satisfy the most pedantic of players the runes work like a sort of magical transistor, clever. Keep an eye open for Runes and potions after fights, they may be hidden. Outside the city, unnumbered horrors await, dungeons, monsters, thieves, witches, warriors and much more. Careful provisioning carries its own reward here, as the ill provided start to starve and have to leg it back to civilization. This is an area where a computer should (and does) have an advantage over a dungeonmaster, the computer knows how much you are carrying and how much food you have, and it can be bothered to hold you to it! Graphics are very good, if a trifle sexist in their design, the windows and various screens are reasonably easy to pick up. Sound is somewhat lacking and entirely forgettable (a plus for bleary games reviewers!). Overall the game is comfortably roomy and pleasantly difficult, providing a great deal of entertainment at every twist and turn. Perhaps a little too 'heavy' for committed action fans, no scrolling violence in this one, combat is reported (a bit fast) in terse sentences, but very enjoyable for the armchair dungeon walloper.

Huw Pryce



Choose your heroes wisely



Those ever vital statistics

RATING

Spirit of Adventure

RANKING ▶ 007 ◀

PRODUCER: Starbyte
SUPPLIER: Starbyte
GENRE: Roleplaying
PRICE: £25.99

GAME-PLAY	82%
SOUND	70%
GRAPHICS	84%
LONG-EVITY	86%
OVERALL	78%

TECHN. DATA

COMPATIBILITY

- ☑ AMIGA 500
- ☐ AMIGA 500 plus
- ☐ AMIGA 600
- ☐ requires HD

SUPPORTS:

- ☐ HARD-DISC
- ☑ 2.DRIVE
- ☑ 1 MB RAM

DEVICE: Mouse

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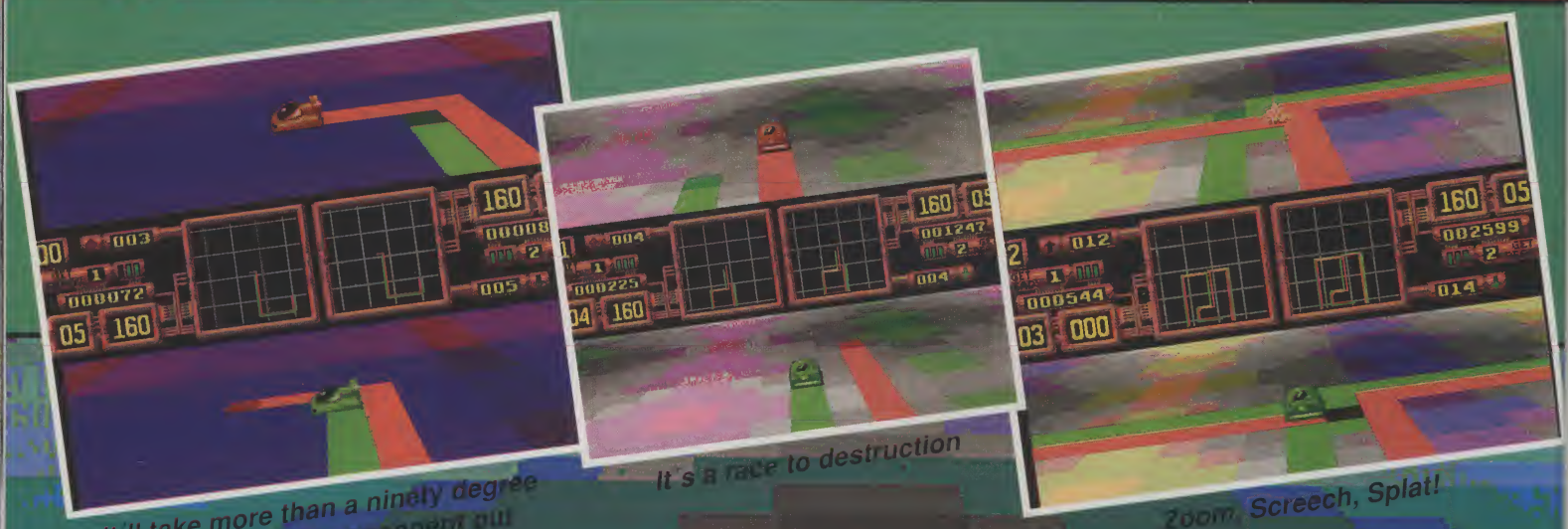


It'll take more than a ninety degree turn to wipe this opponent out

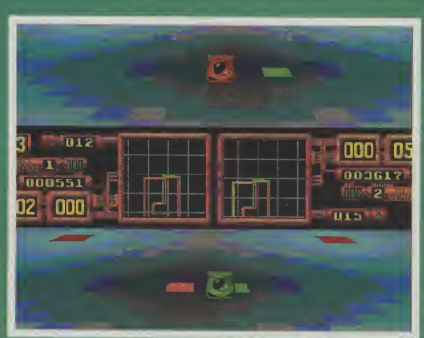
It's a race to destruction

Zoom, Screech, Splat!

REBEL RACERS

Some people drive like this all the time. Far be it from me to go into the derivations of a game (ahem! Ed.) but are any of you old enough to remember a film called Tron?

Made by Disney, the film employed computer animation of a very high standard to depict the plight of man who after an unfortunate confrontation with a psychotic document scanner is projected into the mainframe of a huge business (and games) computer, where he is obliged to aid his own debugging program - Tron (for it was he), in the battle to defeat the forces of evil within the CPU, armed only with a frisbee. You don't remember that? No neither do I. Tron the arcade game appeared quite some time later, it comprised four games from the film, the ball game, the flying cranes game, the attacking the forces of evil within the CPU with a frisbee game, and of course, the lightcycles game. Which brings us on to Rebel Racer. The lightcycles game in Tron comprised two (three in the film) high speed bikes which left a coloured wall behind themselves, it was impossible to cross the coloured wall left by either bike, or to leave the game area, it followed therefore that only one player would leave the field in one piece, the winner being the last one to crash. The game made superb cinema; high speed, raw excitement, computer animated action. As an arcade game it was too difficult to master without taking out a mortgage unless you had reactions like a fighter pilot. People generally opted for the cranes or the frisbee. Rebel Racer like several other games available over the last few years is identical in almost all respects to the lightcycle game from Tron. The bikes have become cars and it is possible to jump over people's trails without getting killed (if you are using one of you precious turbo boosts). The only other way



in which the game differs from the film is that is was possible to beat the computer in Tron, this doesn't seem possible in Rebel Racer, so it follows that Rebel Racer is best played by two or more people. The Help key puts up the options screen which shows which functions keys to hit to set player options, toggle the music, set the number of lives, computer mode (normal or swine!), and game mode to normal or championship. The championship mode allows players to set up a sort of tournament between four people (or up to three people and the computer in which case the computer will win) in groups of two. Obviously the two and four player options offer the most entertainment value, unless you don't mind being constantly thrashed by a jumped up calculator with the brains of a housebrick and the reflexes of a gunslinger. If you don't want to end up falling out with your Amiga, invite a friend around, fall out with them instead. Aside from the obvious observations about originality, even if you've never played the game before you'll have seen it on film somewhere or other, this game is what you make it. The rules are very simple - kill your opponent by forcing them into a solid object, be it your trail, theirs or a boundary wall. Practice against the computer, but don't expect to win. Simply to play the game against a human opponent demands a fairly high level of skill. The Graphics are very similar to those in the film, suspiciously so in fact. The display is distracting, watch the actual display for too long and you will lose. Sound is okay and the overall game is so well known there seems little point in assessing it save to point out that it's probably as good as the arcade version (though I haven't played that for several years). The best place for a game such as this one would have to be in a virtual reality booth, where it would really come into its own on monitor or small television screen it loses a great deal of the excitement.

Huw Price

RATING

Rebel Racer

RANKING

▶ 005 ◀

PRODUCER: Starbyte
SUPPLIER: Starbyte
GENRE: Arcade
PRICE: £ 25.99

GAME-PLAY	72%
SOUND	67%
GRAPHICS	75%
LONG-EVITY	60%
OVERALL	77%

TECHN. DATA

COMPATIBILITY

- ☑ AMIGA 500
- ☑ AMIGA 500 plus
- ☑ AMIGA 600
- ☐ requires HD

SUPPORTS:

- ☐ HARD-DISC
- ☑ 2.DRIVE
- ☑ 1 MB RAM

DEVICE: JOYSTICK

Weeeeeiiiiiirrrrrddd! Strange. Odd. Peculiar. Unusual. Bizarre. These are just a few of the words used to describe the Editor...erm, Harlequin.

HARLEKIN

So what's it about? The normal response to that question, for a platform and ladders game such as this would be "Who Cares?" However, this scenario really does bear reading. Not just because it explains the weirdness that takes place on-screen but because the scenario itself is refreshing, interesting and, would you believe, poignant (look it up). It goes something like this.

Chimerica is a pretty amazing world that is situated in a far off corner of imagination. The place is crammed full of memories, dreams and lots of interesting stuff that is just waiting to be discovered. The place itself is a fairly fragile one but it's kept alive and healthy by that being who displays untold energy, innocence and curiosity - a child. Just the one. His name is Harlequin. In the early days this kid enjoyed himself in the wonder of it all until he grew up (a terrible thing to happen to anyone - Peter Pan had the right idea). So Chimerica wasn't so great anymore. The weirdness became boring, he got used to the wonders of the place. So he upped and left to find a new, more adult life and all of the mind-numbingly boring things that go with it (silly fool).

Poor ol'Chimerica, lost without the child it once knew, fell into disrepair and into the hands of the powers of disbelief (grown-ups have lots of this type of stuff - have you noticed?) While cold reality set in the dreams and the imagination were beaten out of Chimerica. Until the day that Chimerica's heart broke.

That's the aim of the game folks! Having returned to Chimerica to find the despair and decay your task is to repair Chimerica's heart. The four pieces, of which, are scattered around the game world. Once found they must be taken to a separate level to return Chimerica to its former glory.Arriving on two disks with 11-pages of the manual being in English, Harlequin is a large (850 screens worth) arcade adventure. Although you will need to kill the resident baddies you will also need to put your thinking caps on because this game is full of switches and puzzles to sort and levels to map because as the manual states `some of the doors will always lead to the same world [however] the world that a door will lead to will be dependent upon how the switches are set'. I can see the help pages of Amiga Mania being full to the brim with this one!

A leap for joy but watch out there are clouds on the horizon

The control of Harlequin himself follows the usual conventions. He can run and jump with the rest of them. Fire power normally consists of hearts but other weapons can be found such as extra powerful hearts, rockets and so on. On the first level you have to scale a whopping great clock. Each section, of which, is being patrolled by rampaging masks and alarm clocks (makes a change from Ninjas anyway). There are lots of extra items to find, such as an umbrella in case you jump from great heights, switches that activate moving platforms and weird graphics to marvel at.

On other levels you will encounter structures constructed from cards, lego-type bricks, jigsaw pieces and many more. You'll have to adapt to many of these features. For example, at one point you'll need to turn into an Angel Fish to travel under water.

One of the good things about Harlequin is the character animation. While not as professional as Prince of Persia there are still some nice touches. For example, run around too much and the little guy will be gasping for breath when you stop running.

The only real black mark against this game is that you have to reload the entire game when you run out of lives. A silly mistake which gets a little frustrating after a while. On the whole, though, Harlequin is an exciting and challenging game that will delight, entertain and charm the socks off you.

Paul Rigby

RATING

Harlequin

RANKING

▶ 001 ◀

PRODUCER: Gremlin
SUPPLIER: Gremlin
GENRE: Platform 'n' Ladders
PRICE: £ 25.99

GAME-PLAY	88%
SOUND	82%
GRAPHICS	83%
LONG-EVITY	70%
OVERALL	88%

TECHN. DATA

COMPATIBILITY

- ☑ AMIGA 500
- ☑ AMIGA 500 plus
- ☑ AMIGA 600
- ☐ requires HD

SUPPORTS:

- ☐ HARD-DISC
- ☐ 2.DRIVE
- ☑ 1 MB RAM

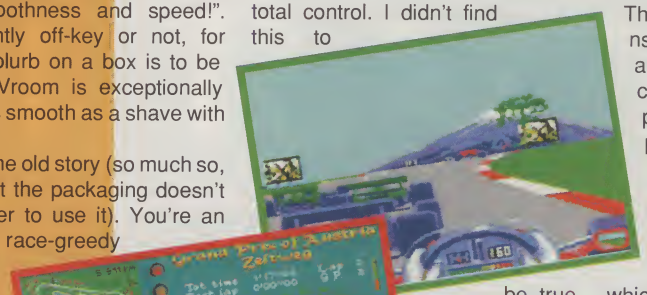
DEVICE: JOYSTICK

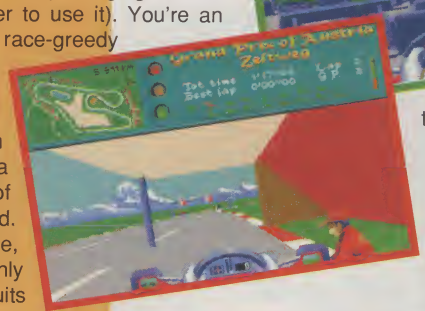
VROOM

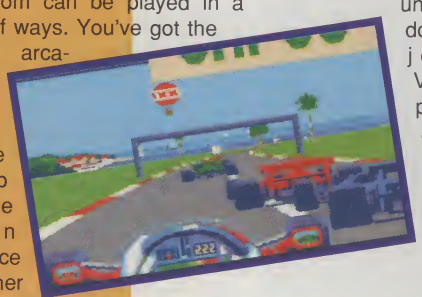
To mark the beginning of the World Grand Prix championship, the customary glut of motor racing games are starting to make their appearance. Vroom is one such game, but it's unlike most grand prix games in that a) it's fast and b) it's reasonably playable. Oh, and c) it's French. The first two of these points would count as an advantage, at least....

From the slightly pigeon English on the rear of the box, one learns that Vroom offers "supreme arcade action and assures you of a racing game of exceptional smoothness and speed!". Well, slightly off-key or not, for once the blurb on a box is to be believed. Vroom is exceptionally fast and as smooth as a shave with engine oil.

It's the same old story (so much so, in fact, that the packaging doesn't even bother to use it). You're an ambitious, race-greedy driver out to make a name for himself on the formula 1 circuits of the world. This time, you've only got six circuits on which to prove yourself a hero, so screw up once and there's little chance of retribution on the other few circuits.Vroom can be played in a variety of ways. You've got the standard arcade mode, which sets the game up as a Pole Position type 'race the other cars and accumulate points for distance travelled' game. You get to proceed to the next circuit if you overtake enough cars. Pretty straightforward and less pressurised than the 'deeper' game.Then there's the championship mode. Here, you've got to qualify for the position on the grid first, then drive in all six grands prix, with the normal points system retained: ten for a win, six for a second and so on. Even finishing last won't prevent you from going into the next race, but of course it won't do much for your dreams of championship glory.Control is one of the game's few let downs. It's a bit touchy to say the least. According to the instructions, mouse is better for total control. I didn't find this to be true though. You have to push up to accelerate and pull back to brake. Of course, there's the left and right. But what if you have to brake and steer at the same time? Fine with the joystick, but very tough with a mouse. I'd advise against the rodents unless you really don't like using joysticks- Vroom's graphics are pretty average when seen as stills. You might not think that there's anything special about the screenshots and to be honest there isn't much. But you'll never believe how fast they are unless you saw them move. It's quite impressive - arcade standard. And yes, the game moves very smoothly as well. Sound will not disappoint either. I was impressed with how real the engine's whine sounded and how lifelike the 'attack' and 'fade' of the passing cars was.That said, Vroom has got some faults. The graphic for your race car is very disappointing. It looks very much like a go kart, with a big pair of hands wrestling with the small wheel and tiny front tyres and spoiler. Steering is tricky even with the joystick. Braking seems to lack feel, being too easy to misjudge when approaching high speed corners. You either overshoot and crash or slow right down to an easily-overtaken crawl.Crashing is a bit of a problem too. Sometimes the game lifts you back onto the track automatically and sometimes you have to steer your way onto it. Through a forest of roadside signs, that's not an easy thing to do and you may well just end up crashing again, wasting more precious time.Still, the good points outweigh the bad and, even with only six circuits, Vroom is a challenge which should keep you playing for a few long hours. It's nice to see a modem link- up option which is a feature of 16-bit computing that has not been fully exploited. If it's total realism you're after, look elsewhere. If you're out for a nice, easy ride, keep searching too. But if you want a race game that's not over-complicated but still poses a problem or two, give Vroom a try. You won't feel let down.







Ashley Cotter-Cairns

RATING

Vroom

RANKING ▶ 005 ◀

PRODUCER:	UBI Soft
SUPPLIER:	UBI Soft
GENRE:	Simulation
PRICE:	£25.99

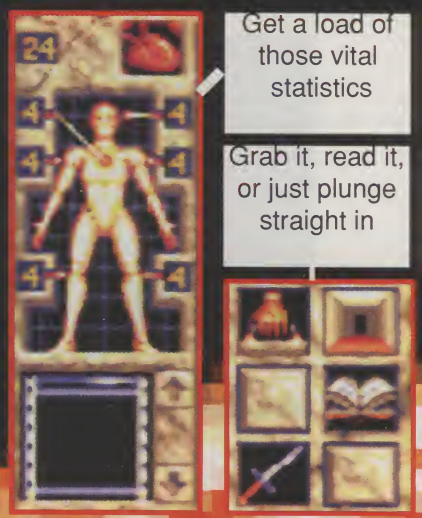
GAME-PLAY	89%
SOUND	90%
GRAPHICS	92%
LONG-EVITY	78%
OVERALL	88%

TECHN. DATA

COMPATIBILITY	SUPPORTS:
☑ AMIGA 500	☐ HARD-DISC
☑ AMIGA 500 plus	☑ 2.DRIVE
☑ AMIGA 600	☑ 1 MB RAM
☐ requires HD	DEVICE: JOYSTICK

What's Elvira's most outstanding feature? Her grating voice? Her legs? Her cleavage? Or the quality of her merchandising department? I know the answer to that one is open to question, so let me ask the same of her latest computer game, The Jaws of Cerberus.

ELVIRA II



This is one sucker you don't want to fleece

Well, doubtless the answer to the above question, when applied to the game, becomes the graphics and general presentation. You're playing a game by Horrorsoft and the idea is that it frightens you. So turn the lights off, bump up the sound control and prepare to be scared. Elvira II is a graphic adventure which looks at first glance to be much like Dungeon Master. Delve a little deeper, though and you'll find a game with its roots more firmly in the text adventures of Infocom days than in roleplaying.

Your task, as Elvira's latest spark (flame implies too much of a commitment), is to enter the film studios where she's been locked up, find her and get out - alive. She also has lost her necklace, so that's something else you'll have to find. As if you need another task... What she neglected to mention in her extremely weird telepathy spell was that there has been something very strange happening at the studio. What can you expect to find there? That's anyone's guess in a place where horror films are made, but let your imagination run riot and you'll get about a third of what you'll actually encounter.

The first task you'll face is finding a way into the studio. There's a locked security gate and no apparent way to open it. The gatehouse is locked too. Perhaps you'll need to find a way to break in. You'll wish you didn't though: there's a pretty gory sight awaiting you. Blood is splattered over the walls and a door. Where is the security guard? Don't ask - and don't open the door.

Once you've found the key to the security system and entered the first of many copy protections, the gate opens and lets you progress further into the game. You'll soon tire of getting out the copy protection wheel and looking up codes, but at least the graphics justify the use of them. Every time you need a code, it's entered into a keypad or computer on screen.

Far too innocent to be true

Everything may be picked up and studied. Larger items may be examined by clicking on them. Your inventory appears at the bottom of the screen and to use an item you must first click on it. Any options for the item appear at the right of the display and you must click on them to activate your choice. Having done that you'll have to use the pointer to drag the object to the on-screen location where it's needed to be used. Any text which must be displayed replaces your inventory for as long as you take to read it and select another option.

Exploring and solving puzzles is good as far as it goes, but when the going gets tough there's only two other ways to progress: by the use of magic or by good old-fashioned hack and slay. Weapons found may be used in a variety of ways. You can opt for violent or defensive combat modes and must use the pointer to attack your foes on screen and in real time. Spells can be cast by collecting the right amounts of each ingredient and by expending your magic points. Run out of either and the best you'll achieve is embarrassment in the face of the enemy.

Elvira - The Jaws of Cerberus is a big game. This is reflected in the price and the seven disks rattling around in the box. It will keep you playing long into the night if the game grabs you. I like the way that everything happens graphically and the game relies on text very little and only where necessary.

If the game's graphics and atmosphere fail to excite you, you'll tire quickly. It's a brave game and one which I'd recommend to adventure fans - this is what Infocom addicts dreamt of years ago. A good one to show off the Amiga's graphics to your non-Commodore friends and a challenge that won't lie down.

Ashley Cotter-Cairns

TECHN. DATA

COMPATIBILITY	SUPPORTS:
☑ AMIGA 500	☐ HARD-DISC
☑ AMIGA 500 plus	☑ 2.DRIVE
☑ AMIGA 600	☑ 1 MB RAM
☑ requires 1 Meg	DEVICE: Mouse

RATING

Elvira 2

RANKING ▶ 002 ◀

PRODUCER: Horror Soft
SUPPLIER: Accolade
GENRE: Adventure
PRICE: £34.99

GAME-PLAY	92%
SOUND	91%
GRAPHICS	96%
LONG-EVITY	80%
OVERALL	92%

ULTIMA VI

Well, folks - it's here. Probably the most respected RPG on the market today has reached part six. Only Coronation Street has more episodes than this game!

The large box contains three disks that have to be installed either on four floppies or a hard disk. You also get the ubiquitous cloth-like cardboard map, a 48-page "Compendium", an Amiga reference guide and a black `orb of the moons' gemstone. Even though the game is only playable on 1Meg (and upwards) machines I'm amazed to see that all of the superb original PC features remain. Comparing Ultima VI with earlier Ultimas, a traditional occupation for reviewers of a new Ultima, is more difficult than usual. Previous Ultimas have a changing scale. That is, place your party icon over a town icon, press return and you zoom from the outdoor scale into the town-mode scale. With a third scale existing for combat. The unique aspect with Ultima VI is that the whole world is played at the town-mode scale! The landscape is extremely detailed, far beyond the towns in Ultima V even. So, although the total map surface is not much different from Ultima V the actual play area is 16 times bigger, because of the extra detail. The principle aspect of the more recent Ultimas that has impressed me is the game-philosophy. The Ultima series veers away from the hack 'n' slash RPG and presents you with a more thoughtful, plot-oriented game. After you've seen the excellent introductory sequence you get to create your character. This is done in the time-honoured fashion of popping into the gypsy caravan and answering a series of problem questions. Once into the game you'll see that the interface has changed completely from Ultima V. The new interface is icon-driven. Basically, you click on the command icon and then click on the object you wish the command to be acted upon. Every object is "live", if you can touch it, you can manipulate it in some way. For example, in a room in Lord Britannia's castle is a telescope pointing out of a window, in a westerly direction. When you "Use" this item you take the mouse pointer from the end of the telescope and drag it in any westerly direction. After that the screen will scroll in the chosen direction letting you see, to the telescope's maximum range, the terrain that you would see if you had actually looked through the telescope itself. I spent ages in that castle trying to use every object I could find, trying to find out how each one worked, great stuff. Icons presented are: Attack, Cast, Talk, Look, Get, Drop, Move, Use, Rest and Begin/Break Combat. Incidently, the icon system doesn't preclude typing in from the keyboard. Origin have used their excellent keyword system for interaction so words can be typed in to prompt NPCs (non-player characters) for more information. Player characters are permanently displayed on-screen. Clicking on them brings up a Dungeon Master-type display showing what the character is carrying in his hands and what his inventory is. It also shows what position he will adopt in combat (see later). Spells are handled in a similar way to Ultima V. You need a number of reagents to cast your spells and the highest circle or levels is still eight. However, you'll see a greater choice of spells. Combat has been changed. Firstly, there is no "combat zone" that you are whisked to when fighting occurs. You can just walk off a pathway and into a band of raging Orcs, for example. The combat area is were you find it. Each character holds a pre-determined position for future combat (lead, flank, etc). So when combat occurs the party will quickly fall into position. The only problem with this game is the speed - it does chug a bit. You could really do with an accelerator to pump up the megahertz. However, this takes nothing away from the game itself which is still a cracker. The graphics are superlative, there's an enthralling plotline, untold depth, a high level of character interaction with an intricately detailed and delicately balanced world that will take a long, long time to explore. Ultima VI is role-playing at its most creative.

Paul Rigby

TECHN. DATA

COMPATIBILITY	SUPPORTS:
✔ AMIGA 500	✔ HARD-DISC
✔ AMIGA 500 plus	✔ 2.DRIVE
✔ AMIGA 600	✔ 1 MB RAM
✔ requires 1 Meg	DEVICE: Mouse/Keyboard

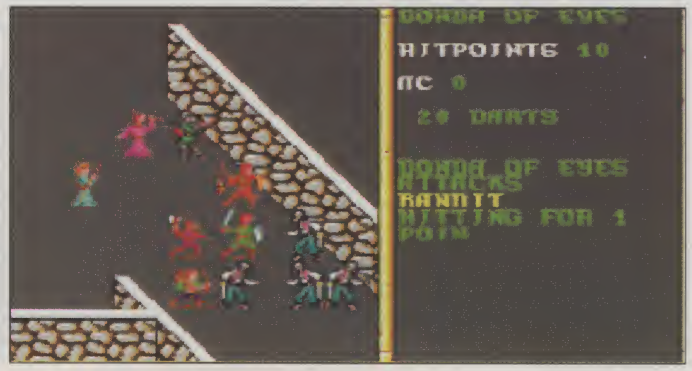
RATING

Ultima VI

RANKING ▶ 002 ◀

PRODUCER: Origin
SUPPLIER: Mindscape
GENRE: Roleplaying
PRICE: £ 30.99

GAME-PLAY	89%
SOUND	77%
GRAPHICS	91%
LONG-EVITY	80%
OVERALL	90%



Gateway to the Savage Frontier

Gateway is Volume I in a new series set in TSR's AD&D "Forgotten Realms" world. The locale is the northern Sword Coast far to the west of the first series.

The game arrives on three disks with an Amiga supplement (and an addendum - see later), Adventurer's Journal and Rule Book. Only gamers with 1Meg Amigas need apply here. When you start you can get a quick look at the game via the built-in demo or you can load a pre-rolled party to have a wander around. Strangely, the reference card advises you to save your game every hour. Is this a reference to the Amiga itself or are SSI admitting that their game is a bit shaky?

The most damning part of the installation is the addendum which pours cold water over the hard drive installation instructions listed in the reference sheet. In fact, a hard drive cannot be used. SSI's reasons are pretty poor "Due to the size and the scope of this game...blah, blah." Oh, come on SSI! It looks like SSI can't reclaim the RAM that is taken by a hard drive. This is crazy as we're talking about a 1Meg-only game, here. It looks like SSI can't be bothered to solve the problem so they've taken the easy way out by disregarding hard drives totally.

As the game begins, your characters have been robbed of all but one small purse of gold while celebrating a successful job of guarding a caravan. They swear to find the thief and avenge themselves. After re-equipping as best they can, the party meets Krevish, who gets them a new commission. In the course of fulfilling this commission, they discover a threat to the Sword Coast from the Zhentarim. It is up to the party to foil this threat.

Initially the battles are challenging, but once your characters get above level 3, combat becomes easy until the final confrontation. However, the mazes are tough. You have to go back to Pool of Radiance to find mazes as tough as Gateway's, and the puzzles are equal to those in Secret of the Silver Blades (except there is no Well of Knowledge to give you the answers).

The ending is problematic. It is possible to kill the main villain, but the end-game sequence ignores the fact that the party killed him. The final battle is based on an original idea that makes it interesting and challenging. However, there is a very legitimate trick that permits an easy win. You can continue to play after end-game, but the overall situation doesn't change in any way. The side effects of the Zhentarim plot continue. This may be deliberate, as the overall plot of the series seems to be to foil a Zhentarim master plan. This quest makes only a small dent in the plan. Still, showing some effect of the defeat would have been more satisfying.

As with the previous gold box games, the user interface is a mixture of improvements and disappointments. The Fix command now also memorizes spells, but the automatic joining of items from Death Knights of Krynn and the scroll bundles from Secret of the Silver Blades is not available. The automatic spell memorizing does not allow you to memorize additional spells your characters get when they advance a level. A separate Memorize is still needed for that.

The artwork is the best yet in the gold box series. The giants, trolls, and ogres are not only more realistically sized, but are much more menacing looking. There is one exception: The lizardmen look like pot-bellied lounge lizards rather than horrible monsters.

Copy protection is manual look-up which (finally!) is presented in the right order (page number, then line number, with word number last). One major improvement in the copy protection is that the password is needed only the first time you start, instead of the previous random calls.

Gateway to the Savage Frontier is a decent RPG with a proven, if rather staid, design. However, a number of design imperfections prevent it from being as good as it should have been.

Paul Rigby

TECHN. DATA

COMPATIBILITY	SUPPORTS:
☑ AMIGA 500	☐ HARD-DISC
☑ AMIGA 500 plus	☑ 2.DRIVE
☑ AMIGA 600	☑ 1 MB RAM
☑ requires 1 Meg	DEVICE: Mouse

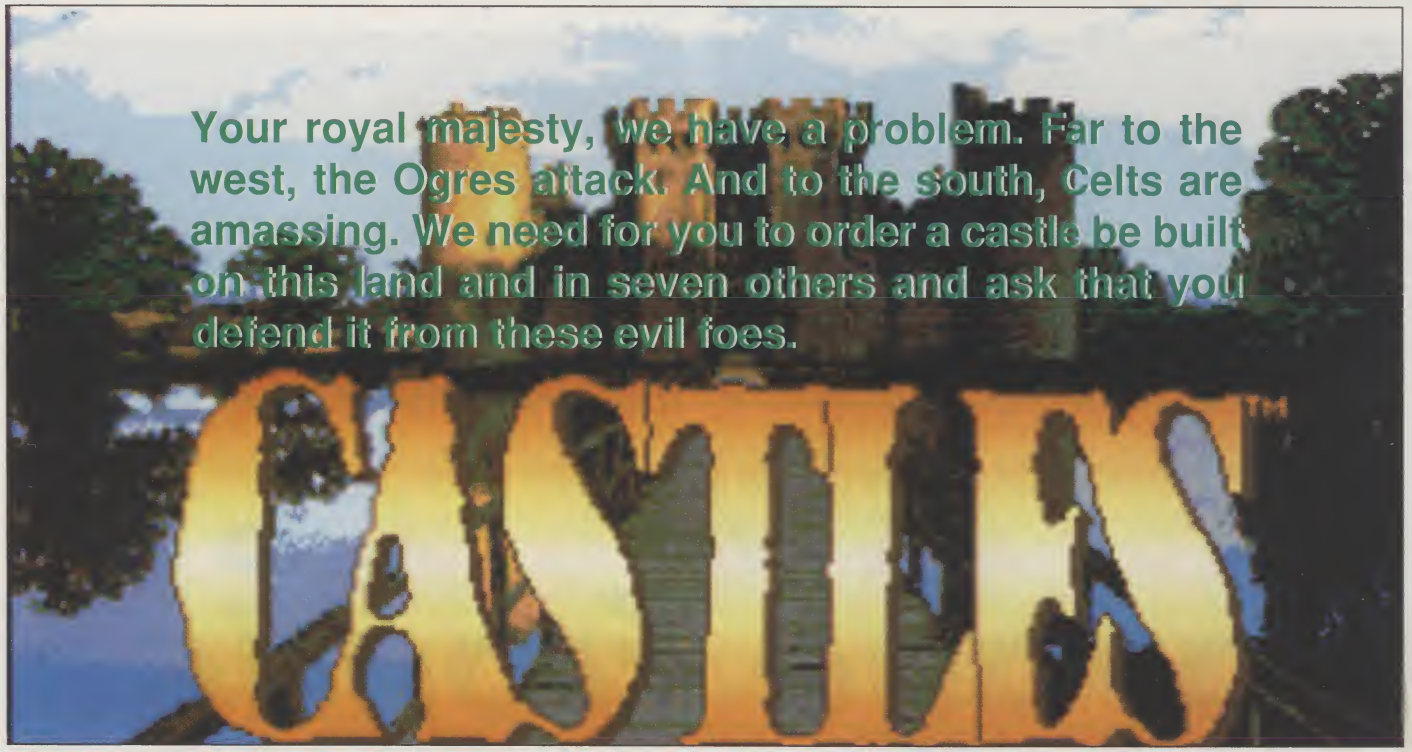
RATING

Gateway to Savage

RANKING ▶ 009 ◀

PRODUCER: SSI
SUPPLIER: U.S. Gold
GENRE: Roleplaying
PRICE: £ 32.99

GAME-PLAY	70%
SOUND	78%
GRAPHICS	80%
LONG-EVITY	70%
OVERALL	72%



Eventually, you must turn defence into attack and advance far enough to destroy the Celts once and for all. You shall start with the royal treasury at 2,500 gold pieces and must use this money wisely to hire hands to build your castle and defend it.

Your first task is to design the castle. How big or small you make it is up to you. But I would warn against making the first construction too complex, or else it will be many months in completion and require many hands to build. A smaller castle will only give home to a few troops and will not provide such a great tax income. You will also need to bear in mind that attackers may damage the walls or towers, so you should take care to keep some monies in reserve to pay these unexpected costs.

When you begin a castle plan, the screen will switch from the main one to a plan blueprint. On here you can set the foundations for the various towers, gate and walls that you want the castle to be constructed from. There are two tower types, your majesty. The first is the older and much loved square type. These are faster to build but less strong to resist attacks. You would be better off with round towers, if time and funds afford. They take much longer but their curved nature wards off certain types of attack and they are stronger.

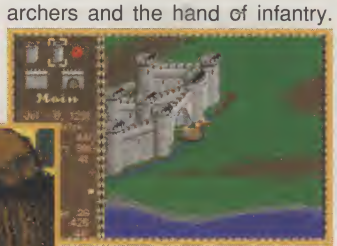
Due to the small number of castle piece types, planning a castle is simple, although a plan can be as complicated or straightforward as you wish. It's perhaps a wise strategy when starting a game to build a small inner tower house and then build new walls around it when you've finished. But before any of your great plans may begin, majesty, you must recruit workers to help you. You may specify individual workers for specific tasks if you wish, but merely clicking on Hire in the menu will increase the size of the whole workforce and recruit several of each type.

Other factors in attracting a workforce include taxes and wages. Tax workers too highly and they will become less inclined to work. Offer higher wages and you will find it easier to attract workers to the castle. I trust your majesty will strike a happy balance between these two poles. Other influences on your performance will come in the form of random graphic screens with messengers offering various pieces of news and options. A good king will be wise when making judgements on such matters, for his rulings will be the way his subjects will judge him. Caution, majesty.

You should keep in mind the threat of enemy invasion when building the castle and have infantry on reserve. They are not redundant in peace times: while idle, you may put them to building a moat to further protect the castle.

You may also set your troops to training, to improve the sight of archers and the hand of infantry.

Choose your friends wisely



Should the enemy attack, you must defend the walls from the invaders. Units of archers and infantry must be placed at strategic points on and around the wall. As the enemy approaches, archers must be clicked on and then given a target, while foot soldiers must be clicked on to make them attack the nearest enemy. Not all battles are do or die. A siege may result and if so, I hope your majesty thought to buy in reserves of provisions...

I'm sure you will find ruling a kingdom a rewarding experience, although it is not a profession which comes naturally. You will make mistakes, most likely by wishing for too large a castle initially and spreading your resources too thinly. Graphically, Castles will be pleasing to you. Workers run around during the building phase and soldiers actually engage in battle. Sound drains your energy, being mostly a tune which will tire you eventually, though you may switch it off if it offends.

Should your majesty persist with the game and learn its finer points, success will result. And with success will come the desire to achieve more and to practise. Truly, the more Castles is played, the greater its subtlety and quality will emerge. Approach this problem with an open mind and you too could be called a great ruler by those who know you.

Ashley Cotter-Cairns

TECHN. DATA

COMPATIBILITY	SUPPORTS:
☑ AMIGA 500	☑ HARD-DISC
☑ AMIGA 500 plus	☑ 2.DRIVE
☑ AMIGA 600	☑ 1 MB RAM
☑ requires 1 Meg	DEVICE: Mouse

RATING

Castles

RANKING ▶ 001 ◀

PRODUCER: Interplay
SUPPLIER: Electronic Arts
GENRE: Strategy
PRICE: £29.99

GAME-PLAY	91%
SOUND	80%
GRAPHICS	93%
LONG-EVITY	76%
OVERALL	90%

Once upon a time, long long ago, I dreamed of the day when I would be able to afford to own my own arcade. Failing that, I would have several slot machines in my garage and play them every night.

PROJECT X

I worked out that I'd need about five thousand pounds to make this dream a reality and began saving.When I got to about five hundred pounds I gave up and bought an Amiga, then upgraded it. So much for dreams

But did I do the right thing after all? Games like Project X tip the scales towards a Yes vote. Because, quite simply, the game is just what you'd expect from an arcade machine, except that you don't have to plunge pound coins into a slot (just as well - you've already invested more than twenty once you've got the box home).

One thing arcade machines don't go heavy on is plot. Usually, it's a case of ask no questions and take no prisoners. In this case, there's an explanation for the bout of mindless violence you're about to embark upon. Ambition bites the nails of success, it's said. In this case, the ambitious types were the scientists. They decided, after an especially wild party, to play games with genetic experiments.

Having created a bunch of mutated creatures, the scientists dumped these hapless, half-dead creatures on the planet Ryxx to die out. Unfortunately for you (being the one in charge of clearing up this mess) the mutants not only survived but managed to reproduce and evolve into evil death scum. Now you've got to infiltrate Ryxx and wipe out this rather virulent hangover.First clue to the size and graphical quality of this game comes when you open the box and FOUR disks fall out. This amount of storage - over 3Mbytes - usually contains the data for an epic role-playing or strategy game. And as soon as disk one is in your drive, you'll begin to see justification.

An attractive but unimaginative menu presents you with several options. There's a choice of two musical styles, one or two player gameplay (taking turns, not simultaneous, alas), three ship types, two skill levels and the chance to load or save the highscore table. The ships are the most interesting. There's the fishlike slimline ship, which can move more quickly but carry less weaponry; the elephant ship, big and slow but with the potential to be a tank; and the middle ground, a good all-rounder. A nice touch is that player two may choose a different ship from player one.Play starts after some fairly lengthy disk accessing. You're deposited, after a short explanation about your goal, at the start of a right-to-left scrolling star field. You're forced to fly along at a constant pace but are otherwise free to move in all directions. Right away you'll notice how well drawn and smooth the graphics are, despite the whole of the screen being utilised. Very impressive indeed.A digitised voice tells you to "Destroy waves for power up!" and the fun begins. Alien craft swoop onto the screen in small formations. They are fairly easy to despatch, just a couple of hits from your forward-firing cannon deals with them. Shoot all of the creatures in a wave and that long-awaited power up appears. Pick this up and the power bar at the bottom of the screen is highlighted. For every power up symbol collected, the highlight moves along one space on the bar. The powers include speed-up,guns, homing missile, plasma bolt, magma (hot lava bolts), stealth (a nifty shield) and the disgustingly powerful laser beam.

You'll need as much power as you can grab because the fun's only just started. Mutants become more and more agile and powerful as you progress into the game. At regular intervals your skill as a pilot is tested to the full by giant monsters with huge amounts of firepower. Then there's the asteroid belts... Every iota of your game-playing experience will be needed to defeat just the first level. Then you progress to the planet where more of the punishment awaits you (and very pretty punishment it is, too).

Some might say that Project X is too difficult to be incredibly addictive. I wouldn't concur to that point of view. It's tough, sure. And you'll have to be a very good player to complete it, even after hours of practise. But Project X has that special ingredient that makes it compulsive to the point of insomnia. Those of weak will power, beware. The best shoot-em-up for a long time.

Ashley Cotter-Cairns

Swallow this fish face

Blast or be bombed

TECHN. DATA

COMPATIBILITY

- ☑ AMIGA 500
- ☑ AMIGA 500 plus
- ☑ AMIGA 600
- ☑ requires 1 Meg

SUPPORTS:

- ❑ HARD-DISC
- ☑ 2.DRIVE
- ☑ 1 MB RAM

DEVICE: JOYSTICK

RATING

Project X

RANKING ▶ 003 ◀

PRODUCER: Team 17
SUPPLIER: Team 17
GENRE: Shoot 'em-up
PRICE: £25.99

GAME-PLAY	93%
SOUND	95%
GRAPHICS	92%
LONG-EVITY	73%
OVERALL	92%

DELIVERANCE

You're probably half way to guessing what the aim of this game is. Storm, fresh from his game Storm Lord, has been called upon to perform another great - wait for it - rescue. Who do you have to rescue?

Yup, the fairies. Those winged and angelic supernatural entities have got themselves into a mess and need Storm to do the honours of freeing them from their torture. Having snatched them from the clutches of the evil Queen Bahd, you now have to deliver them to their homeland.

Queen Bahd is, ahem, bahdly upset at this and will do everything in her power to stop you. Her magic is powerful and her servants will stop at nothing to put an end to Storm's valiant quest. Somewhat fortuitously, Storm is a well-built sort of God. In fact, he's about a third of the screen in size and uses every pixel to good effect (in a violent sort of way).

The game begins in a castle and will eventually, luck and skill willing, take Storm across a forest region, through Hell and, on Dragonback, through the air to the final encounter with Queen Bahd. Storm has it easy to begin with. Only a few bats and some superbly animated monkey beings face his trusty axe, which comes complete with blur - batteries not included - as he slices into the baddies.

Then come the spiders. Arachnophobes will dislike intensely their hairy appendages, as they creep along the ground towards our Godlike chum. True to their more boring (and less frightening) natural counterparts, these spiders crawl up walls and along ceilings ready to drop in at a moments notice. They're annoying in the extreme, popping out of treasure chests and clinging to your legs, sapping energy.

No fear, for Storm needn't get too close to them, as his axe may be flung as well as wielded in close combat. Crouching or leaping allows the angle and thus the range of the weapon to be varied. On the subject of jumping, Storm does it very nicely indeed. He leaps up and stretches as high as possible, before gripping anything that his fingers may meet on the way down. This applies to ladders, vines or ledges, depending upon which world he's currently traversing.

More surprises await in the forest section. This is a bit like 'Treetops', similar to the jungle home of Tarzan but there is a minor difference: it's alive and evil. Walking along a seemingly normal bamboo and vine walkway, you'll find that Storm is set upon by the walkway itself, which animates into a snakelike being. This must be subdued before it reverts to its intended purpose, allowing progress to the higher platforms once more.

If this was the only nasty shock waiting, I'd advise a relaxing stroll through the greenery. But the very trees are against you, their branches break off and transform into small hostiles. They appear weak, though quick and you may be tempted to ignore them. But they will fly at Storm, metamorphose mid-air into swords in true Terminator 2 style.

I won't spoil any more of the secrets of the platform levels. Having got through all three levels, you're faced with a flight on the back of an undead Dragon to face Bahd. She is not a pretty sight. Nor are her airborne minions any less ferocious than those on terra firma. For playability's sake, the graphics are smaller in this section. They are most odd too. Flying fortresses barrage you with shells. Pegasi swoop in, launching homing (and I mean HOMING) missiles. It's all a bit of a shock after the imaginative land levels to be faced with an average shoot 'em-up.

There's nothing average about the rest of Deliverance. The graphics are bold and huge in the land sections. No thought was spared in the design: twists and unexpected occurrences crop up at every turn. Everything moves well and sounds good. Although the format is well tried and tested, this game's presentation revamps it very successfully. Worth a thrash of any beatie fan's joystick.

Ashley Cotter-Cairn

Ouch, a real pain in the, well chest

TECHN. DATA

COMPATIBILITY	SUPPORTS:
☑ AMIGA 500	☐ HARD-DISC
☑ AMIGA 500 plus	☑ 2.DRIVE
☑ AMIGA 600	☑ 1 MB RAM
☑ requires 1 Meg	DEVICE: JOYSTICK

RATING

Deliverance

RANKING ▶ 001 ◀

PRODUCER: 21st Century
SUPPLIER: 21st Century
GENRE: Beat 'em-up
PRICE: £25.99

GAME-PLAY	92%
SOUND	85%
GRAPHICS	94%
LONG-EVITY	80%
OVERALL	90%

SHADOW LAND

Squillions of years ago, when the Spectrum was the undisputed champion of the home computer games marketplace (it was? - Ed.), there was a game released called Valhalla.

It was an interactive adventure game, which involved a lot of Gods walking about and annoying each other. If you typed in an action, adventure-style, the characters on screen carried it out.

Shadowlands takes this idea several stages further (and so it should - nearly a decade has passed since that monumental game...). It's marketed as a fantasy roleplaying game, which should guarantee that it sells a few thousand units anyway, but I'd class it more as a graphical adventure with violent bits - like Valhalla was.

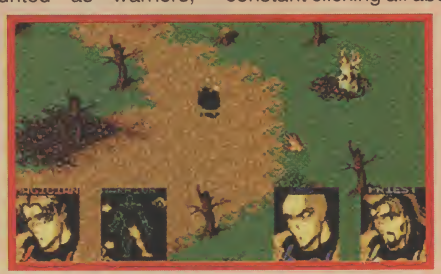
Customise your character

The game uses a clever system, whereby no text input is needed at all. All you need is a mouse and patience - this is a game which is fiddly at times to control and may be frustrating. The major part of the display is taken up by the action screen. This is drawn in most convincing 3D from a forced perspective. All objects and monsters obey the perspective too, so the effect creates a good atmosphere.

Below this display are four portraits. These represent the characters and will either show a plan of the body, divided into separate parts, or a graphic of the character's face if the character is not visible on the main display (yes, you can split up the party if you so desire). To perform an action, you click on the character's body part and then on the feature of the graphics you wish to affect. For example, if there is a notice on the screen, you can click on your character's head icon and then on the notice. The character walks over to the notice and an enlarged version of the sign appears at the top right of the screen. Combat is handled by clicking on the right arm of the character - its action arm - and on the monster you wish to attack. The character will use whatever it has in its hand as a weapon.

One down, only one more to go

Movement is a different matter. You may elect to move a character on its own or choose one as a leader. Clicking on the right leg allows the character to lead, dragging the rest of the party with it, while a left leg click lets you control it without the 'Simon Says' effect. When leading a party, you may choose a formation from the equipment screen. This is called up by a right click on a portrait. Here you may also store items, scrolls and weapons and check on your characters' food and water levels.Creating a character is made fairly simple. You don't have classes as such: all characters are counted as warriors, despite having magical powers (This affects a character's chance of reading spells from scrolls, as there is no spellcasting in the traditional sense). You may change the portrait of the character, allowing some really ugly combinations, input your own name and reroll the statistic bars if they are not to your liking.The manual makes a lot of a system Shadowlands incorporates called Photoscape. This is a light handling code which allows for as realistic a shading technique as possible. Characters carrying torches in a dungeon, for example, may not discover an item until they move fairly close to it, as the torch only has a limited range for its circle of light. Photoscape is annoying at times, though I was fairly impressed with the appearance it lends to a scene. This also applies to nightfall in the outside world as well as underground.



The party awaits, the quest begins

So the graphics create a good atmosphere. What of the control method? Does it work well? Sadly, not really. I liked the idea of clicking on portraits and using the scenery to interact with the characters. This soon wore off, as I found that the constant clicking all about the screen to do things which were fairly simple got on my nerves. Worse, in certain formations, characters got foxed by objects on the screen and couldn't navigate around them, without being helped with another directional mouse click.

So Shadowlands is a nice idea that didn't quite pay off. You certainly won't find another game like it outside of a friend's dusty Spectrum collection, though I don't know whether novelty value is enough to sell a game these days. Adventure fans might enjoy it more than roleplaying buffs. But don't hand over your readies until you've tried it in the shop.

Ashley Cotter-Cairns

TECHN. DATA

COMPATIBILITY	SUPPORTS:
☑ AMIGA 500	☐ HARD-DISC
☑ AMIGA 500 plus	☑ 2.DRIVE
☑ AMIGA 600	☑ 1 MB RAM
☐ requires HD	DEVICE: Mouse

RATING

Shadowlands

RANKING ▶ 011 ◀

PRODUCER: Domark
SUPPLIER: Domark
GENRE: Roleplaying
PRICE: £29.99

GAME-PLAY	74%
SOUND	65%
GRAPHICS	89%
LONG-EVITY	70%
OVERALL	70%

SPACE CRUSADE

I like to see how a boardgame converts to the Amiga format, just out of curiosity. While I haven't seen Space Crusade in boardgame format, I have played Advanced Heroquest and liked the conversion. Space Crusade takes heroquest where no hero marine has gone before - into, would you believe, space - and it not only looks better than Heroquest, it plays better too.

You've succumbed to the propaganda, read the billboard posters and been swayed by the uniform into joining the space corps. Their latest recruitment drive is due to the proliferation of the Dreadnought, a huge alien intelligence weapon which threatens the empire's very structure. The Dreadnought's forces are breeding inside floating hulks of spaceships - a convenient format for different scenarios! - Which you, the space corps, must neutralise.

Gremlin has learnt a lot from its work on Heroquest. Space Crusade is as slick as the sea around a swimmer with a greasy hair problem. It opens with a similar main menu to Heroquest's, with large option icons for choosing a team, mission and beginning your quest, (or in this game, slaughter). You may choose one of three playing teams and, like Heroquest's four player option, any or all of the teams may be controlled by a single player or three players may combine to attempt the mission together.

As soon as you click on the start icon, you'll see the only annoying factor of Space Crusade: The program asks you to place the data disk in DF0:, even if you've got 1Mbyte and an external drive. That's very unprofessional. However, when you see the work that has gone into the game proper, you'll be even more amazed that the programmers couldn't spare a bit more thought in this department.

A major advancement in Space Crusade is the choice of views. There's an overhead view, which in my opinion is the best as it offers a wider angle to plan your strategy. Then there's the 3D view, which is closer to Heroquest and to the boardgame itself. If you choose the overhead view, the display switches for the combat scenes (which are more common than in Heroquest) to show the outcome of the various actions.

There are a few things that each character may do on their turn. The most obvious is to move. When this icon is activated, the squares onto which a marine may travel are highlighted and you simply click on your chosen destination. A character may move either before or after other actions have been taken, to best position themselves for combat.

There is hand-to-hand or ranged combat on offer. Both types are controlled by simulated dice and the highest total for attack wins. You may even vanquish your foe if he attacks you, as the game incorporates offensive defence tactics. If you roll a higher defensive score than your attacker they may come off much the worse for wear.

BOOM! You're dead

In ranged combat, other factors like distance and power of weapon, as well as the skills of the marine, effect the outcome of an attack. When a player or enemy is killed, a flash of light and a suitably pained scream is the result. Of course, each player's commander is not alone - he has a unit of troops as support. These supporting men are expendable, but if the leader is killed (he has hit points a la Heroquest), he loses all bonuses and you next mission is commanded by a less experienced commander with fewer commands at his disposal.

More advanced players will appreciate the subtle extras available to troops, like blind grenades, medi-kits and stun grenades, these replace the spells of the fantasy game Heroquest with their sci-fi equivalents. Each unit has different 'spells', which means that a careful choice will need to be made by the players when they assign themselves to a command.

Space Crusade picks up where Heroquest dropped. It's got a lot of nice effects, touches and tweaks which a great game needs to lift itself above its competitors. Sound is good, but presentation could hardly be better planned or implemented. Strategy fans will not feel cheated if they part with the money for this Gremlin offering.

Ashley Cotter-Cairns

RATING

Space Crusade

RANKING ▶ 005 ◀

PRODUCER: Gremlin
SUPPLIER: Gremlin
GENRE: Strategy
PRICE: £25.99

GAME-PLAY	86%
SOUND	74%
GRAPHICS	78%
LONG-EVITY	70%
OVERALL	80%

TECHN. DATA

COMPATIBILITY
- ☑ AMIGA 500
- ☑ AMIGA 500 plus
- ☑ AMIGA 600
- ☐ requires HD

SUPPORTS:
- ☐ HARD-DISC
- ☐ 2.DRIVE
- ☑ 1 MB RAM

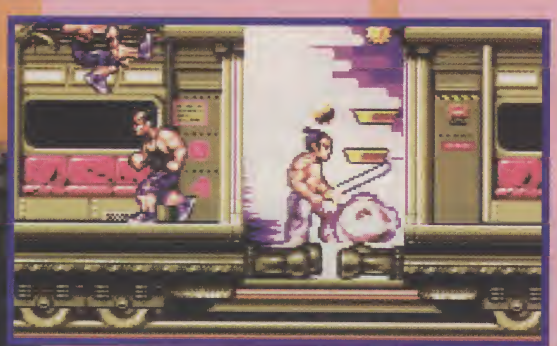
DEVICE: Mouse

Legends tell of a great master of the martial art called Samurai. The master grew in power but also in age. Fearing that the great talents he possessed would be lost, he apprenticed a young and promising Samurai, in order that he might impart to him his skills and make him a great warrior also.

In need of a little magic, then call the mage

FIRST SAMURAI

You play the part of the young follower. As fate would have it, your master is attacked by a powerful Demon King, against whom you have no defence. He mortally wounds the master, but your tutor finds some hidden reserve of power and calls up the Wizard Mage. This spell-caster chases the Demon King off into time, but can do nothing to save your master. You ask the Wizard Mage to send you after the Demon King, so that you might find vengeance. Silly boy.



Is this a typical New York subway?

What follows is the game Vivid Image chose to call First Samurai. It's set in ten time areas, or levels to you and me. Each level is made up of many screens of very attractive and detailed landscape, through which you must track the Demon King, to hopefully drag him back to face the Wizard Mage in a last conflict. Before you can even dream of this, you've got to get close to him and that means a hard, long battle. Your master did not die wholly in vain, having taught you some of the most impressive, as well as incredibly useful, moves a Samurai needs to know. Incidentally, hari kari was not one of them: not that you'll need it - there are enough demands on your limited energy reserves anyway. The First Samurai can throw machetes (long pointy knives to you), or engage in more honourable hand-to-hand combat. Jumping kicks, foot sweeps, roundhouse, punches - all are accessible from the joystick. None of this fumbling for the spacebar bit. What's more, the Samurai has been taught some of the rudiments of magic by the Wizard Mage. He can use this in two ways. Firstly, he calls automatically his Samurai sword. This magical weapon always appears when the young warrior has enough power to summon it and is a formidable weapon, being more powerful and quicker than your hands and feet. But the energy he uses on the sword can also be used to charge up pots. Rather than a desire to take up bonsai tree growing, this allows the Samurai to materialise at this pot the next time he's unlucky enough to die. And die he will, at first, until some practise has been put into learning the moves and secrets of this subtle arcade adventure. Bats, birds, dragons, insects, minor demons, guards, ninja - everything a Samurai has nightmares about is up against you. Your energy is represented by a muscly arm at the bottom left of the screen which disappears slowly. This may be topped up by eating food, found on screen or in hidden hampers. Contact with hostiles also drains magic from the Samurai, robbing him of his sword if he has earned it. Play takes place over different time zones, allowing the graphics to be varied and exciting. The First Samurai will have to fight on a train top, in a lift and in urban surroundings as well as in his own time to win through. Every zone has its own unique features and monsters. Backdrops and characters are beautifully drawn and coloured. Sound is great, too. Zany tunes mark the collection of various objects, plus there's the standard grunts, groans and screams that all Samurai seem to specialise in. On every level, there are 'secret' puzzles to solve. Solving them often means trekking backwards and forwards across several screens, which can get tiring. Fortunately, there's enough addiction and hidden features to keep you at it. A magic bell allows you brief contact with the Wizard Mage, who can help you to overcome difficult obstacles. A lamp will reveal, by little gleams, where all hidden food and bonus objects are to be found. And if you experiment, bonus lives may be accrued in various ways. There's more to The First Samurai than meets the eye and ear. The game encourages replaying to get better scores. But it also makes life really easy on the player. Seamless disk techniques allow play from one level to the next without having to wait ages for the pending screens to be loaded. Control has been made as natural as possible, which is reflected in the ease of mastery of every move. And from user- friendliness comes playability and addiction. Original and fun, this game is a sure hit.

Ashley Cotter-Cairns

This guy´s a real hot head

TECHN. DATA

COMPATIBILITY

- ☑ AMIGA 500
- ☑ AMIGA 500 plus
- ☑ AMIGA 600
- ☐ requires HD

SUPPORTS:

- ☐ HARD-DISC
- ☐ 2.DRIVE
- ☑ 1 MB RAM

DEVICE: JOYSTICK

RATING

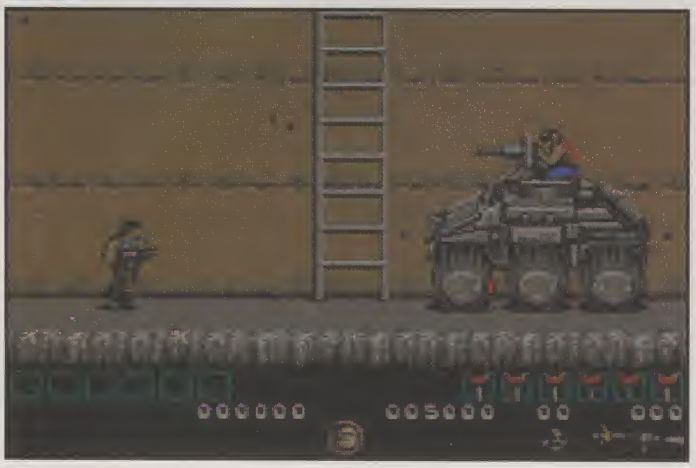
First Samurai

RANKING ▶ 002 ◀

PRODUCER: Vivid Image
SUPPLIER: Vivid Image
GENRE: Beat´em-up
PRICE: £25.99

GAME-PLAY	92%
SOUND	89%
GRAPHICS	88%
LONG-EVITY	76%
OVERALL	90%

Midnight Resistance



Picture it - King Crimson (a rather good rock band of the late 70's early 80's if I remember correctly) has kidnapped your family in a bid to acquire your grandfather's superior weapons designs and thereby gain control of the World. You (wait for it) have to take on his army and rescue everybody. The fighting and rescuing bits take the usual form of walking along shooting people, well it's not all walking along, there's some crawling and a bit of climbing to be done too.

Keep an eye on the various people killed en route, some carry keys, you can carry up to six of these at a time and they can be used to gain weapons at storage areas between levels. There are a number of different weapons of many shapes and sizes, the flamethrower is great for close quarters for example, but useless over distances. Rather more interesting than many similar scrolling arcade games, engaging graphics and plot, the music's a bit tedious, but easily toggled off. Go to it.

Huw Pryce

RATING

Midnight Resistance

RANKING ▶ 009 ◀

PRODUCER: The Hit Squad
SUPPLIER: The Hit Squad
GENRE: Arcade
PRICE: £7.99

GAME-PLAY	73%
SOUND	45%
GRAPHICS	75%
LONG-EVITY	50%
OVERALL	67%

TECHN. DATA

COMPATIBILITY	SUPPORTS:
☑ AMIGA 500	☐ HARD-DISC
☑ AMIGA 500 plus	☑ 2.DRIVE
☑ AMIGA 600	☑ 1 MB RAM
☐ requires HD	DEVICE: JOYSTICK

Lotus Turbo Challenge

This was hailed as the most playable driving game on the Amiga when it was released a year ago or thereabouts. Since then, of course, loads of other driving games have appeared. Some have ousted Lotus (Lotus 2 to name but one), but it's still a reasonable thrash for frustrated joyriders.You have a Lotus. Wow, what a surprise. You have to drive it very quickly. Well, would you believe that? And there are a lot of other cars to race against and hazards to avoid. Gosh.

Actually, although there's little new here, what there is, is nicely done. The road cambers and fluctuates nicely and fairly fast. Sound consists of a choice of tunes and/or sound effects, so your ears won't get too bored. As if you'd notice, because there's plenty of skill required to defeat the above-average computer drivers. Three skill levels add adverse weather conditions and make the tracks increasingly hazardous.Once picked up, it's easy to beat, but the tenner is well spent when you consider that there's worse in the full price field.

Ashley C[illegible]ter-Cairns

RATING

Lotus Esprit

RANKING ▶ 006 ◀

PRODUCER: Gremlin
SUPPLIER: GBH
GENRE: Simulation
PRICE: £9.99

GAME-PLAY	83%
SOUND	83%
GRAPHICS	80%
LONG-EVITY	68%
OVERALL	82%

TECHN. DATA

COMPATIBILITY	SUPPORTS:
☑ AMIGA 500	☐ HARD-DISC
☑ AMIGA 500 plus	☑ 2.DRIVE
☑ AMIGA 600	☑ 1 MB RAM
☐ requires HD	DEVICE: JOYSTICK

Rainbow Island

Rainbow Islands is one of the all-time classic cute platform games. Bub and Bob, stars of the previous game Bubble Bobble, throw away their sickeningly cute dinosaur disguises and become chubby cherubs. Their soft soap bubble weapons make way for magic rainbows - equally cute and inoffensive, but far more colourful.

Play involves climbing to the top of each level. After every four levels, you have to face the guardian of each island. These massive monsters are just super-sized versions of the other cute creatures you'll encounter. It's fast, fun and very addictive: so much so that you'll have to drag yourself away from the screen to eat and sleep. I kid you not.

Graphics and rinky-dink tunes are of arcade quality. In fact, this conversion of a slot machine even has a two-player option (not simultaneous, though) and a credit feature to allow you to continue play. Power-ups, secret rooms and treasure, terrifying (ahem!) nasties and a frightening grab factor combine to make Rainbow Islands one of the greats. The price is fab, too.

Ashley Cotter-Cairns

RATING

Rainbow Islands

RANKING ▶ 003 ◀

PRODUCER: Ocean
SUPPLIER: GBH
GENRE: Platform 'n' Ladders
PRICE: £7.99

GAME-PLAY	88%
SOUND	80%
GRAPHICS	82%
LONG-EVITY	70%
OVERALL	85%

TECHN. DATA

COMPATIBILITY	SUPPORTS:
☑ AMIGA 500	☐ HARD-DISC
☑ AMIGA 500 plus	☑ 2.DRIVE
☑ AMIGA 600	☑ 1 MB RAM
☐ requires HD	DEVICE: JOYSTICK

ST Dragon

St Dragon is a renegade cyborg with a mission - to rid the galaxy of its tyrannous compatriots. The usual shoot 'em-up format, changing backgrounds, acquisition of ever newer and more awesome firepower, and the inevitable fight with the ubiquitous end of level baddie. However, the superior graphics and animation make this a particularly irresistible version. St dragon swirls sinuously about the screen dispatching a bewildering succession of nasties with a variety of weapons. The end of screen baddie really is vicious and the many traps are agonizing. It is important to remember in tricky situations that the head is the only vulnerable part, the tail can take care of itself.

No game is beyond criticism, but St Dragon's good points far outweigh any little irritations, really the only glaringly duff point is in the blurb that comes with the package, claiming to be a reverse of the St George legend. Wise up guys - it's only a shoot 'em- up.

Huw Pryce

RATING

St. Dragon

RANKING ▶ 006 ◀

PRODUCER: Storm
SUPPLIER: Kixx
GENRE: Shoot'em-up
PRICE: £7.99

GAME-PLAY	86%
SOUND	74%
GRAPHICS	78%
LONG-EVITY	67%
OVERALL	80%

TECHN. DATA

COMPATIBILITY	SUPPORTS:
☑ AMIGA 500	☐ HARD-DISC
☑ AMIGA 500 plus	☑ 2.DRIVE
☑ AMIGA 600	☑ 1 MB RAM
☐ requires HD	DEVICE: JOYSTICK

PUBLIC DOMAIN

Welcome to the Cheap and Cheerfuls, this month we take a generous sampling from the 17 Bit catalogue as we experience classic games of days gone by and psychedelic effects fit to turn your stomach.

**17 Bit Software,
1st Floor Offices,
228 Market Street,
Wakefield, Yorks, WF1 4DH.
Telephone: (0924) 366982**

Elektica
(Disk 1752)

Yet more music, this time from Cascade. Eight, rather lengthy, tunes assault your ears in this bouncy little sonic offering. It's all original stuff too.

Contact Has Been Made
(Disk 1788)

Doctor Who fans rejoice, not only do you have a weird and wonderful backing track (The Invisible Enemy by Vark) but countless black and white digitised pics from the series. A worthwhile addition to any music collection, even if it's only for the pics.

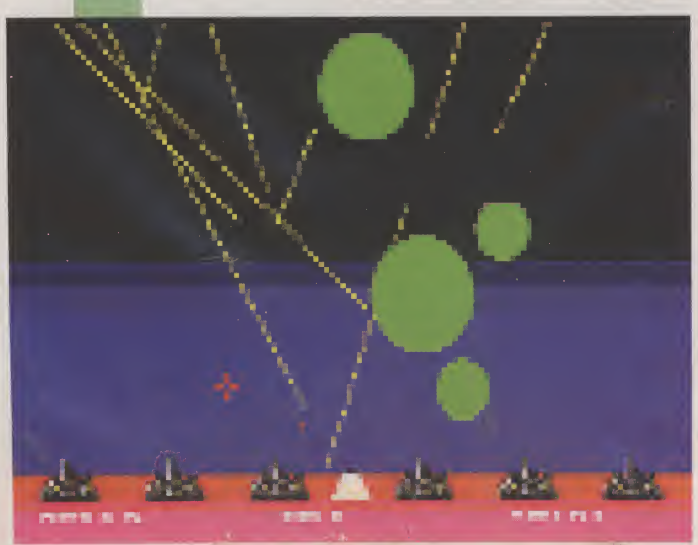
Multi-Megamix II
(Disk 1780)

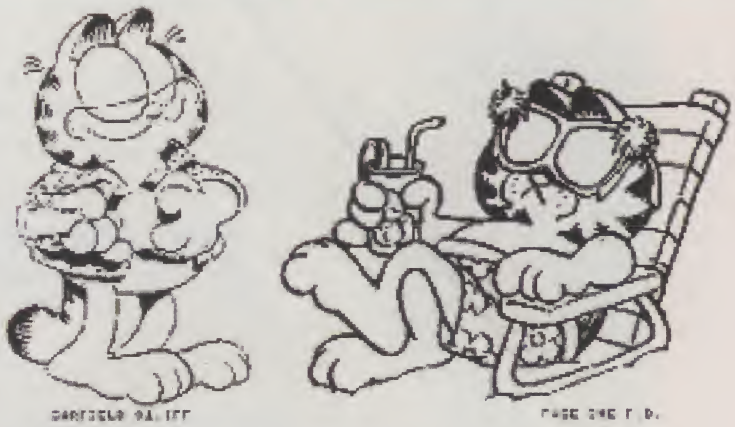
Prepare for a sonic assault as the Kefrens take a break from their usual trip down the light fantastic and delve into the world of computer music. A pretty backdrop plays host to the megamix, a combination of hit tunes blended together to produce a rather special track. I recognised the KLF track but that was about all, in short it's good.

Special effects abound in this demo/promotion. Lots of swirly effects plus a rather nice ray-tracing involving lots of silver balls rotating around the CAT logo, all surrounded by many silver columns, lots of reflections basically.

Golden Oldies Compilation
(Disk1724)

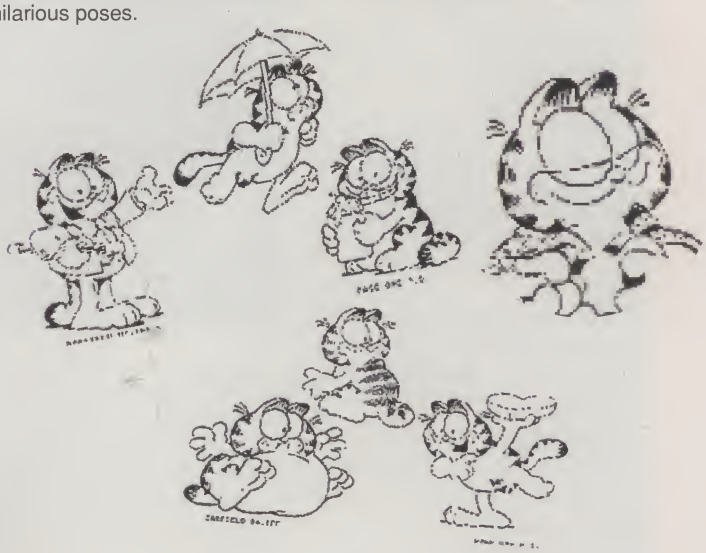
As the title of the disk suggests this is a collection of seven arcade hits from the time when two colours on screen at once was flashy. They're all here, Space Invaders, Missile Command, Galga plus many more, (unfortunately Galga does not work with all Agnus chips,





Garfield
(Disk 1723)

Simply put a collection of black and white pics of your favourite feline. A couple of Garfield's friends make a brief appearance, the rest of the slideshow is dedicated to the arch feline, not in story form but many hilarious poses.



Final Confession
(Disk1745)

Hey, a demo with weird effects that doesn't make my stomach emulate the screen. Tasteful effects ranging from wobbly things to plasma, would be an excellent demo if it were not for the swearing in the text.

Dear Tipster,

I am enclosing a copy of my Populous II player guide - I hope that this is a useful guide to the game and that it helps you complete the game.
I also have a small tip for Emlyn Hughes International Soccer - If you are winning a game, press V to speed up the game to go direct to half/full time.

POPULOUS 2 -

THE PLAYERS GUIDE

EFFECTS

Move Papal Magnet
This is very important, when it is used with the fight and settle option you can eradicate huge areas of the enemies land.

Perseus
Perseus is the most intelligent of the knights, he will avoid enemy magic, so he can be left to fight without supervision.

Plague
This is most effective when used with armageddon as it kills any people infected when armageddon is chosen.

Armageddon
When you use armageddon, you can use other magic too. A well placed earthquake in the opponents land can deprive him of men, baptismal fonts are also useful, though your men will fall in if you're not too careful. Armageddon often, however, halves your score.

Trees
Trees can be put to two good purposes:-

A: You can plant them in your land to increase popularity and increase the birth rate.

B: You can plant them in enemy territory in large amounts and then use a fire column or fire rain to destroy the enemies houses and land, as the fire destroys all the trees and the houses and people with it. Be quick though, as he will get extra manna as long as the trees are there.

Renew Land (Plant Flowers)
This is one way of making land destroyed by volcanos useable again. Other ways include flattening land and lighting striking it, then raising it again, or using fire rain, etc. Flowers also increase your popularity and manna rate.

Swamp
Use swamp when the enemy is weak, as this limits his further growth, and swamp is cheap on manna use. Remember to raise/lower or renew the land before your men come too close, or they will die too.

Plant Fungus
An ideal way to kill large amounts of enemy cheaply without damaging the land, however, control the fungus so it doesn't spread into your own land.

Adonis (Plant Hero)
Adonis is a useful knight because he splits every time he scores a victory, however, make sure your leader's energy is well into the fifth column before creating Adonis otherwise he will be killed quickly and the opponent will gain a lot of manna, plus you'll lose your power.

Roads
These have a couple of uses: 1) They stop fungus growths, 2) use them to direct the enemy into swamps, baptismal fonts, fungus, etc.

Walls
When used properly, walls are useful. I have a couple of favourite applications for walls. I use them to protect my men while confining the enemy to a certain area. If you build one around the enemy papal magnet when his leader is dead, he will never be able to get another leader. Walls do not stop heroes, however.

Earthquake
Use them well away from your people as they can go anywhere, if you put more power into earth magic, you can control them better. If it does go onto your land, make sure you lower the land it is on, any land raised will be destroyed.

Batholith
Very similar to volcano in Populous 1 as it raises the land and throws up some rocks. Make sure you have a lot of earth power before using it, as it drains your manna quickly.

Hercules
When you turn your leader into Hercules, his energy is doubled. He is immune to walls and earthquakes.

Lightning Strike
Using lightning is a good way of destroying big enemy buildings and leaders. When selected, hit your target and press 1 repeatedly. The lightning will stay at no cost in manna, and will go when the target is dead.

Whirlwind
Best used on the coast as a well placed whirlwind will start a number of whirlpools.

Thunder Storm
A heavy storm will destroy large areas of land, lightning from a storm also sets fire to trees, starting huge forest fires.

Odysseus
If you want a fast knight, he is the one to choose. Odysseus is immune to all air effects.

Gale
The best use I have found for a gale is to start an earthquake on the edge of the enemy island, and then use a gale to blow his settlements and people down the earthquake pits.

Basalt
Useful on lands where you cannot raise land - as it is a bridge for your men to cross. Cannot be sunk or built on.

Whirlpool
Useful to prevent people from reaching enemies papal magnets, better to use whirlwinds wherever possible.

Baptismal Font
When used around enemies papal magnet you will gain a fair number of new worshippers. Beware of your men falling into them and becoming enemies.

Fire Column
These concentrate on higher ground, killing anything that is nearby. Submerge them to defend against them.

Fire Rain
Very good option - destroys land, people and buildings and starts forest fires.

Achilles
He is immune to all fire effects, including lava from a volcano.

Volcano
Excellent option - permanently destroys land unless enemy has renew land option. Best used on large buildings or on leader when at papal magnet.

Helen of Troy
She uses her charm to evict enemies from their houses without damaging the land - best used with battle and settle, or with another hero. She will, however, fall into baptismal fonts, so remove any that are in her way. She cannot be drowned, so use lightning, fungus or swamp to get rid of her if sent by the enemy.

Tidal Wave
Destroys all land below five steps above sea level. Enemy will try to build settlements afterwards, use whirlpools and whirlwinds to stop him in his tracks.

Here are some level codes from 20 onwards : -

20 NGAF	387 ACER	696 PIUNAD
26 UXCCAD	393 AMAAAG	699 LYLOAC
32 LDOMAD	399 LEQUAD	700 INCCAK
36 ADUHAK	402 TUWOAC	701 LLAGAT
42 ALJIAC	408 VEII	702 JIISAB
48 PEHE	414 GHAKG	705 AAER
54 IIDDAF	417 MOLLAK	711 AGAAAD
60 INUNAD	423 WOUBAK	713 AMOOAC
66 LOISAB	430 SUOWAB	724 NGSUAD
70 000MAC	434 ERVEAD	730 UXDOAB
75 EMAAG	435 TTALAG	736 LDLEAT
90 UXII	441 NENEAD	742 AFTHAK
96 LDAKAG	446 JIIIAT	748 MEUGAC
108 MEOMAB	452 OMAKAF	750 FENEAT
114 ERNEAT	458 UMNGAC	755 TTUHAC
120 PIABAF	463 LEETAG	765 LLOPAB
131 ACFEAG	464 QUHO	771 ACPIAT
136 OPUMAB	468 NGUPAB	775 AGLO
141 HEAGAF	474 UXINAT	780 UNGHAD
147 NEMMAC	479 SONEAC	786 TUUPAB
155 IMALAF	485 OWOP	790 MMMNAC
161 MONEAC	491 UNSIAG	796 DDOO
167 WOOP	502 IIHOAT	800 LDQUAB
173 UPSIAG	503 MNCCAB	806 AFDOAT
179 TTAFAK	504 PIATAK	810 ALUM
184 PIAMOAT	505 NEISAG	821 CCCCAB
190 JIERAF	511 THAMAK	828 INMNAB
195 ACUH	517 AKNEAB	831 THUG
201 AMJIAG	518 OOEMAK	833 AAEFGAF
202 UMQU	524 UBUXAB	835 ACNEAB
208 QUSOAG	530 TUUXAT	840 OPITAK
211 NESIAF	536 VEPIAF	845 HETU
214 MMFEAK	540 DDLOAG	850 TUFEAK
220 DDALAB	542 GHAGD	855 SIUNAT
224 LDAGAD	548 ADMN	860 DDAGD
228 ADERAK	554 ALOOAG	864 LDETAK
234 ALAAAC	560 PETIAG	870 AFAAAK
235 UNNEAK	566 IIADAC	875 UNWIAF
241 SUABAK	572 INTTAT	880 UNWIAF
244 EGUX	573 LLAKAC	885 CCIIAC
249 NEIIAK	574 JIPIAC	890 ISTTAT
251 LYLY	575 INTTAT	894 JILL
260 OMLOAF	576 DOLL	896 DOLOAF
263 AGISAK	580 OMAGAK	900 OMUBAG
268 UBMMAT	586 UMMMAT	905 AMAMAC
274 TUOWAF	592 QUOWAF	911 LEVEAT
280 VEEGAD	598 MMEGAD	915 NEABAB
285 WISUAG	604 DDACAB	920 VEJIAC
291 MODOAK	610 ABTTAG	925 WILYAT
295 WOUMAF	616 ATLOAK	931 HOUMAF
301 UPTIAD	617 UXNGAG	937 UXTIAD
302 FEUBAF	620 MEUBAF	943 UHATAB
305 SUHOAK	625 SUATAB	945 SUUPAF
309 CCUPAF	629 CCERAC	950 IIALAB
315 LYINAD	635 LY	955 LYOOAK
320 DONEAG	636 INEGAC	960 DOAC
324 OMAK	642 LOAK	965 AKDOAD
326 OOOPAK	644 OMOPAK	970 UMDOAD
332 UBSIAC	650 UMSIAC	975 CETIAC
338 TUAF	653 HELEAB	980 NGCCAF
344 VECCAF	656 QUAF	985 TIERAB
350 GHOMAD	662 MMCCAF	990 GHUGAK
354 ABUHAK	668 DDOMAD	992 LDNEAB
360 ATJIAC	674 ABEGAB	994 ABNEAF
363 UNTIAB	676 ADNEAF	995 HOEM
369 SUADAT	678 AFJIAC	THE FINAL WORLD
357 MNTTAK	684 MEHE	WHAT A FIGHT!!
381 LLOOAC	690 ERDDAF	999 WOITAB

Finally, I have extremely powerful god, so if you are weak and want the same power, try this : -

AIECBROQQIWZAOAF.

Yours populous - solvingly
Matthew Simpson (£100)

Dear Tipster,
I have found a couple of cheats whilst playing James Pond 2 - Robocod. Before you enter any of the levels collect in this order Cake, Hammer, Earth, Apple, Tap. The first letter of each item spells cheat. Then go into the first world, you will notice another five objects which spell lives, collect the Lips, Ice cream, Violin, Earth and Snowman in that order and you will receive infinite lives. This last one will not work if you use the second. Go to the first world, then at the beginning collect the spoon on the left and jump up, you should get an extra life.

Oliver Rummery (£10).

Dear Tipster,
If you want infinite lives on Final Fight, when it says "hang on mike turn on your TV" press help.

David White (£10)

Dear Tipster,
Here are a few cheats, I would be very grateful if you could print them.
On Navy Seals type PSBOYS on the scoreboard, during the game press H then escape to skip levels. On Lotus Turbo Challenge 2 enter TURPENTINE as the password for unlimited time or DEESIDE and you will continue on to the next level, even if your time runs out. Here are the codes as well: -

1. NO CODE
2. TWILIGHT
3. PEA SOUP
4. THE SKIDS
5. PEACHES
6. LIVERPOOL
7. BAGLEY
8. E BOW

Choon Tan (£10)

Dear Tipster
Congratulations on being part of the best Amiga mag. ever!
My tipster tip is: - TREASURE ISLAND DIZZY.

Start the game and type I CANFLY
and guess what.... You'll be able to fly.

R. Newton (£10).

Dear Tipster,
A cheat for Robocod 2.
Type in LITTLE MERMAID, then press M to choose the level you wish to play. Type 50 for end sequence.

A cheat for James Pond.
On the first level free all the lobsters then go to the far left of the level and jump out of the water onto a piece of seaweed. Press `down' to go onto level 11.

Andrew Smith (£10)

CHAIN MAIL

Dear Boris,

In his review of "Great Napoleonic Battles: (March issue) Paul Rigby mentioned a Napoleonic construction set by S.S.I. Is this still available? I've just bought an Amiga 500 and I'm interested in strategy war games. Perhaps you could recommend a few titles or, better still, publish an article on the subject. Thanks for a great magazine.

Paul Higlies

BB: By pure coincidence there is an article on SSI this issue but alas you need to write to :- 675 ALMANOR AVENUE, SUITE 201, SUNNYVALE, CAL. N4086, U.S.A. for a copy of The Napoleonic Construction Set.

Dear Boris,

In my quest for an ideal games mag., I have sifted through the extortionately expensive, the uninformative and the down-right boring. This search left me with one mag. - "Amiga Mania".

After reading it through what struck me was the quality of the reviewers - the life and blood of a mag. Each comes across with the exact amount of fact down-to-earthness and humorous reporting I like.

With a few improvements, like provision of a longevity factor to the software review box, cleaning up the blurred pictures and most of all, getting rid of those childish captions below the screenshots and replace them with something more informative, you will go from strength to strength.

All in all your mag was a cheery, tell-it-as-it-is, cost effective way to be informed about current Amiga activity and a mag which I will be glad to buy again and again.

Keith MacGinty

Ed. - Yes I hate the caption too, but it's a dirty job and somebody's got to do it. As for the longevity factor, your wish is our command.

Dear Boris,

For years I have been subscribing to all Amiga and computer magazines especially intent on game reviews, tips, cheats and competitions.

After sampling them for long enough to judge whether the magazines were worth buying regularly I often decided not to pursue them; usually because I thought them a bad investment with regard to game information. Some only gave a few pages of information which was often widely available elsewhere. In the end it could have been cheaper to buy a pig-in-a-poke game in the hope it was playable rather than spend the same money on flimsy opinions of it.

For the first time I bought Amiga Mania and was so pleased at the quality and quantity of game information I made sure I got the April edition - which is everything I have ever been seeking!! I'm sending in my subscription today but wanted to thank you for improving my life. Computer games are my one hobby, weakness, achilles heel, to which I devote a lot of time, effort and expense, none with regret.

By the way I'm not a silly little girl but a successful psycho-analyst who turns to her computer to play puzzle, strategy, god, rpg's etc. as an escape from the stresses of her profession.

By the way do I merit a prize for being eagle eyed? On page 69 (issue April) of Amiga Mania you have (erroneously) printed a view of "Top Banana" instead of "Battle Isle."

Carmen Brulez

BB: Congratulations, you have just won first prize in the secret competition, namely spot the deliberate mistake. You win nothing less than your very own, to keep for ever, copy of Battle Isle - like it or not.

Dear Boris,

Having now read the first 2 issues of your stunning magazine, I can say that AMIGA MANIA is the best magazine on the newsagent's shelf. I can tell that your team is very experienced in computer gaming and the information produced has wit, imagination and detail. AMIGA MANIA is now the magazine that I can trust where buying games is concerned.

Anyway, with the knowledge that you possess, could you please answer the following questions?

1. What do you think of these games:- Rainbow Islands, Z-Out, Pang, Toki, Turrican 2 and Populous 2?

2. Do you think the Amiga is better than all other computers/consoles?

3. Will Sonic the Hedgehog appear on the Amiga?

4. Do you think you could keep up the extremely high standard of your magazine?

Thanks a lot for your help,

Nathan White

BB: 1.- An excellent selection of games with the possible exception of Pang which I found a little simplistic. 2. - OF course it is, any doubts and the newly named Commodore Crusader will be round to visit. 3. - Unlikely for some time yet.

Dear Boris,

The mag is GREAT. I'm writing to tell you can get your mitts on a little do-da called a Rom-Sharer which makes games that don't work on the Plus, work on the Plus. O.K. I haven't got one yet but my mate has and it works fine. They cost just under sixty pounds.

The mag is absolutely Fantastic. I've got a problem on Lord of the Rings though. I'm completely stumped can anyone help me? The mags great I'll buy it next month. Bye.

James "The Sausage" Green.

BB: This Rom-Sharer do-da sounds great, anybody got a little more information on this handy little gadget or even a full solution to

Dear Boris,(or should I start-"Dear Sir Boris"- the geezer should be knighted),

Amiga Mania is the business. The World of floppies and joysticks has been waiting a long time for this (well at least as long as the birth of the A500+). At last a mag. that tells us innocent chaps who got sucked into buying an A500+ which games are compatible.

Marks out of 10:-
Content:11
Design:11
Reviews:11
Price:11

Keep it up, I've already booked my yearly subscription.

Ian Davey

P.S. If you send me a really fab goodies bag I'll mark that out of 10 as well. Tee Hee! THANKS

BB: Sir Boris, I rather like the sound of that. The goodies are in the post.

Dear Boris,

Something amazing happened to me the other day! I walked into my local newsagent to check out the latest computer mags. which I admit I don't usually buy, when suddenly out jumps this hefty magazine with tons of excellent reviews, news, budget games, tips and to top it all off a great game absolutely free. Before I knew it I had slammed my money (only 2.49) on the counter and was on my way home to read the hottest New Computer Magazine around. All I can say is keep it up and I'll keep buying it.

John Major, your Magazine maniac M.P.

BB: It's nice to see you recognise a recession beater when you see one.

Dear Boris

After buying your excellent April issue of Amiga Mania, the best Amiga mag out by a longshot, I read it and came across an article on subscribing to the mag. So I filled in the little form and sent it off right away because no other Amiga magazine has a full game and a poster free every month, excellent up to date reviews, brilliant previews, wicked cheats and with a totally mega price of 2.49 (I usually pay the price of 2.95 - 3.95 and even then you don't get an A1 size poster or a full game).

Anyway, I'd just like to finish this letter by congratulating you on your totally excellent, outrageously wicked and the absolutely best magazine going for Amiga by a mile.

Robert Blackburn

P.S. I think the 500+/500 compatible chart is an excellent idea.

BB: The compatibility chart is proving a great success but, alas, a slight hiccup occurred last issue. The Maniac is to blame of course, we suspect he pinched the incompatibility cross from the Heroes of the Lance budget game and kidnapped the 'R' from the instructions page last issue. Needless to say Ed. has commissioned me to perform certain gruesome deeds upon the Maniac's person. I believe he's lurking around page 27 and I'll be there as soon as I've finished reading all this wonderful mail.

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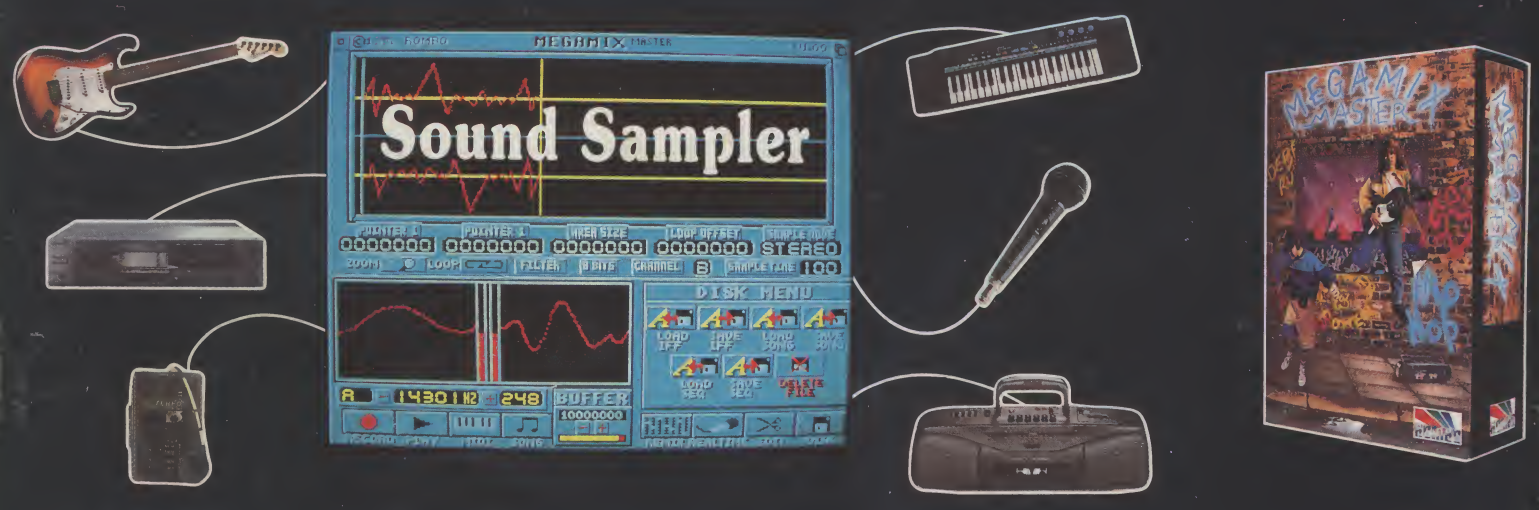

MEGAMIX master is a low cost, high specification digital effects cartridge that plugs into your printer port. It will allow you to sample or record stereo sound from almost any musical source. Special effects such as echo can be added in real time, perfect for the up and coming Karaoke singer who wants to get that live sound through his Hi-Fi. You will find that **MEGAMIX** masters performance and ease of use is unmatched by any rival. Just plug it in and go . . . .

CUT-Remove samples between pointers and stores it in the cut buffer.

COPY-Copies sample between pointers into the cut buffer.

INSERT-Inserts the contents of the cut buffer into the soundwave.

SPLICE-Removes the sample between pointers, stores it in the cut buffer then slides the rest of the soundwave together.

CHOP-Removes all of the soundwave except for the sample between pointers.

DELETE-Erases the sample between pointers.

MIX-Mixes the contents of the cut buffer with the soundwave.

FLIP-Reverses the sample between pointers.

PLAY CUT-Replays the contents of the cut buffer.

ECHO-Adds user definable echo between pointers.

IN-Makes Sample between pointers start quietly and build up to full volume.

OUT-Offers the opposite effect to IN.

PHASER-Adds phase shift to your sample.

LOUDER-Adds volume.

QUIETER-Decreases volume.

SEEK 0-Finds zero points nearest pointers, used in looping.

FILTER-Removes hiss or high frequency noise from your sample.

PACK-Removes every 2nd sample between pointers.

ECHO-Adds echo to and incoming sound in Real Time.

DIRECT-Plays incoming sound direct through Amiga.

SYNTH-Adds user definable distortion to sound in Real Time.

PHASER-Applies variable phase shift again in Real Time.

STEREO ECHO-Adds digital delay between L & R speakers.

VIBRATO-Rapidly varies frequency of sound.

LOAD IFF—Load a single IFF sound sample

SAVE IFF-Saves your sample between pointers as an IFF file.

LOAD SONG-Load a song sequence

SAVE SONG-Save a song sequence.

LOAD MIDI-Load a midi sequence.

SAVE MIDI-Save a midi sequence.

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